



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

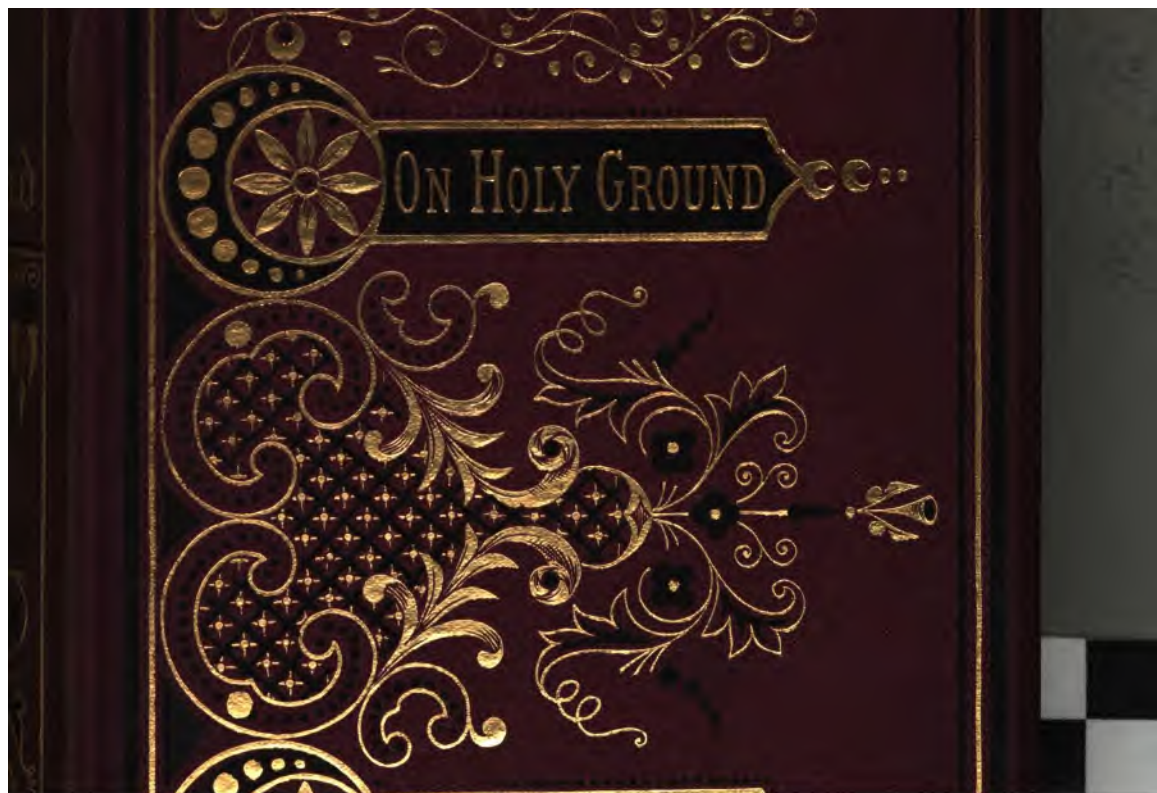
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

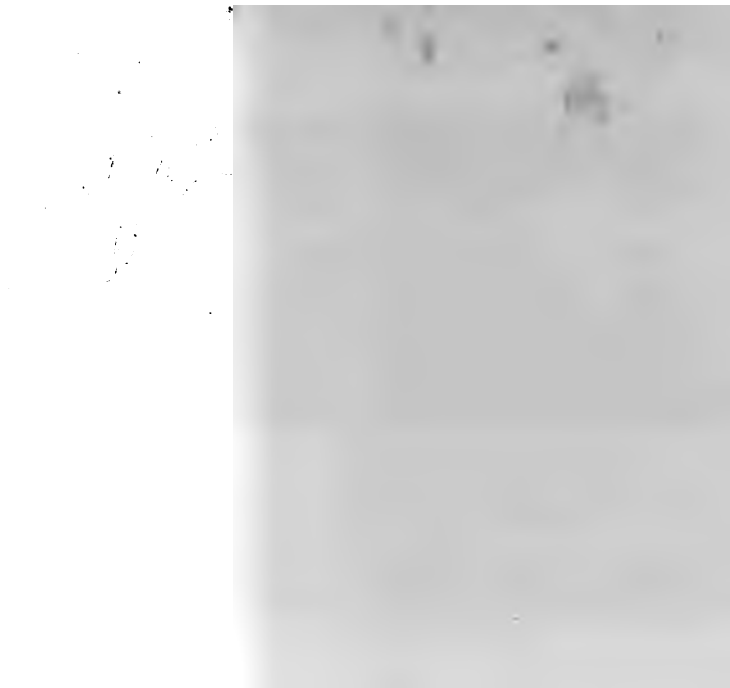
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

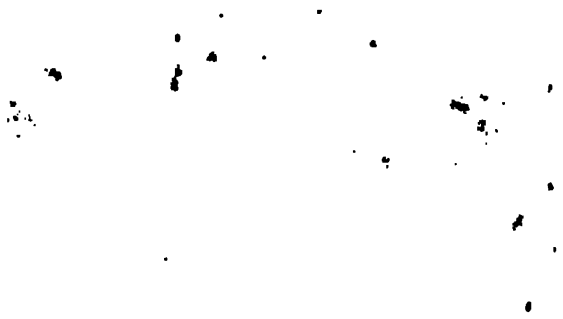
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>











Exterior of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.—*On Holy Ground*, p. 205.
(*Frontispiece.*)

MEMO
OF THE



ON HOLY GROUND:

OR,

SCENES AND INCIDENTS IN THE
LAND OF PROMISE.

BY

EDWIN HODDER,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIES OF NEW ZEALAND LIFE," "TOSSED ON THE WAVES,"
"JUNIOR CLERK," ETC.



WILLIAM P. NIMMO:
LONDON: 14 KING WILLIAM STREET, STRAND;
AND EDINBURGH.

1874.

203. f. 458.



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the importance of using reliable sources and ensuring the accuracy of the information gathered.

3. The third part of the document discusses the challenges and limitations of data collection and analysis. It acknowledges that there are always uncertainties and potential biases in the data, and it provides strategies to mitigate these risks.

4. The fourth part of the document concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It stresses the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness of the data collection and analysis process.



5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of data security and privacy. It outlines the measures taken to protect the data from unauthorized access and ensure its confidentiality.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of data sharing and collaboration. It emphasizes the need for open communication and the exchange of information to improve the overall quality and reliability of the data.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of data archiving and preservation. It outlines the strategies for storing data for long-term use and ensuring its availability for future research and analysis.

ON HOLY GROUND:

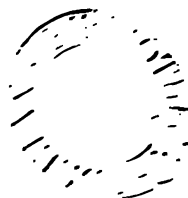
OR,

SCENES AND INCIDENTS IN THE
LAND OF PROMISE.

BY

EDWIN HODDER,

AUTHOR OF "MEMORIES OF NEW ZEALAND LIFE," "TAKEN UP THE HILL,"
"JUNIOR CLERK," ETC.



WILLIAM P. SIMM,
LONDON: 14 KING WILLIAM STREET
AND LONDON

1874

203. 1. 152



“Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon
thou standest is holy ground.” (Ex. iii. 5).

“Where’er we turn ’tis haunted, holy ground,
No earth of thine is lost in vulgar mould,
But one vast field of wonder spreads around,
And all the Muses’ tales seem tritely told,
Till the sense aches with gazing to behold
The scenes our earliest dreams have dwelt upon.”



DEDICATION.

TO PERCY BANKART, ESQ.

MY DEAR PERCY,

Many a rough road you and I have travelled together. In darkness and light, in sorrow and joy, we have trudged along shoulder to shoulder these many years. It was my most earnest desire that we might have visited together the sacred scenes described in this volume ; but it was not to be, and so, as it is the covenanted privilege of those who tarry at home to share the spoils with those who go on pilgrimage, I dedicate to you these stray gleanings from the Holy Land.

But not to you only. That gentle spirit in the Holier Land was wont to share with us when she was here, all that we had and all we were. To me, as wife, and to you, as sister, she represented all that was purest, noblest, brightest, and best in life.

Our loving counsellor, our true heart-friend, our ideal of Christian beauty and womanly grace, has gone from us to engage in a higher ministry. But how near she may really be, how conscious of what we do and say, how interested in our life-pur-

poose, who can tell? Surely we are too apt to think of those who have entered into the eternal life, as separated from us with a blank separation. But Love abideth ever.

So to her sweet memory, and to you, my dear Percy, I dedicate this simple book.

Believe me, ever

Yours affectionately,

EDWIN HODDER.

London, November 6, 1872.



PREFACE.

TRAVELLERS in Palestine are earthly travellers ; they hunger, and thirst, and suffer fatigue ; they are amused with the trifles of the day ; little incidents crop up on the road which provoke a laugh or inspire a joke ; rain in Palestine makes the traveller as wet and uncomfortable as it does in London ; and the hot sunshine scorches the skin more than it does at the sea-side in England. Halting at some sacred place—while it checks the flow of spirits consequent upon “rude health,” and turns the thoughts into higher and purer channels—does not alter the tourist-life. Just as in a tour through our own country, a pause at some cathedral,—when the anthem is echoing through the aisles, or the hallowed words of prayer make restful music in the heart—changes the flow of thought, and makes one leave outside all the trivialities of travel, to be resumed again as the journey progresses, so it is in Palestine.

There is no real incongruity in going from the busy thoroughfare into the house of God ; and there is no real incongruity in speaking of the deep religious sentiments inspired by visiting the sacred places of holy writ, almost in the same breath in which one speaks of the small and trivial incidents of the journey to them.

Every one knows how short a step there is between the secular and the sacred in the ordinary routine of life, and the writer has often wondered, when reading the works of some travellers in sacred places, why they represented themselves as always being in a frame of transcendental devoutness, which is more incongruous—as being opposed to the ordinary rules of mortal life—than if they had represented themselves in their true characters.

The writer has noticed, in almost every book he has read on Palestine, a systematic want of naturalness in the narrative, as though it were sinful to speak of any sacred place unless in a hushed and subdued tone, whereas that sacred place *now* may be perhaps dirty and disreputable, the inhabitants very disagreeable, the circumstances of travelling to it very amusing, the feelings suggested by it very curious—and the narrative of all this may be really instruc-

their associations, and to describe them only with the feelings becoming their most reverent moments, and not at all as they saw them. They describe when they get home what they ought, according to tradition, to have felt when they were there. For example, the writer may be asked what were his feelings when he first stood within the walls of Jerusalem. Well, he knows exactly what he ought to say to please the ears of some devout persons.—He ought to launch out a considerable portion of a sermon descriptive of feelings which he never had then, but which came to him in due course, at different periods, in different moods, and in different places. But if he told the plain truth and spoke naturally, he would say the first thing that struck him on entering Jerusalem was the number of costermongers selling pestachio and pea nuts, the quantity of sherbet consumed at street stalls, the long row of cafés and cigar shops, and the knot of Englishmen (distinguishable anywhere by their hideous costumes) lounging outside the Mediterranean Hotel!

“Trivial details!” says a devout Biblical student in disgust. No doubt trivial, replies the writer, but such details give a much better idea of Jerusalem as it is to-day, than any second-hand rhapsody could possibly do.

Breaking through the traditional plan, the writer has endeavoured to describe what he saw and did in Palestine, in just the same manner he would describe what he saw and did in any other country, narrating as they came, the scenes which called forth



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION,	vi
PREFACE,	vii

CHAPTER I.

JAFFA.

As seen from the Sea—Fellow Travellers—Pilgrims—German Colonists—Cook's Tourists—Boarded by Arabs—"Back-sheesh!"—Napoleon in Jaffa—The Story of Jonah—The House of Simon the Tanner—Battlemented Houses—House-Tops—The Story of Tabitha—A Prison—Camp Life—Miss Arnott's School—Orange Groves, . . . pp. 1-21

CHAPTER II.

SHARON—RAMLEH—AJALON.

Our Cavalcade—The German Colony—The Rose of Sharon—Ludd—Ramleh supposed to be Arimathea—Joseph and Nicodemus—View from Saracenic Tower—Arab Prejudices—Kayssi v. Yemeni—Illustrations of Scripture, pp. 22-36

CHAPTER III.

KIRJATH-JEARIM—KOLONIEH—RACHEL'S TOMB.

Samson's Foxes—Peculiarities of Palestine Scenery—The City of Grapes—The Ark of God in the House of Abinadab—Abou Gosch—Birthplace of Jeremiah—Emmaus—The Brook Elah—A Disappointing Glimpse at Jerusalem—The Convent of Elias—The Story of Rachel and her Tomb, . . . pp. 37-54

CHAPTER VII.

FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.

Gilgal—The House of Zaccheus—Dancers from Jericho—The Fountain of Elisha—Jericho in Joshua's Time—Cherith—Mountain of Quarantania—The Nubk Tree—A New Road—The Inn and the Good Samaritan—Bethany—Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives—We enter Jerusalem, pp. 121-139

CHAPTER VIII.

A SUNDAY IN JERUSALEM.

The Arab Guard—At our Tent Door—Worship on Mount Zion—A Walk Through Jerusalem—St Stephen's Gate—Olivet—Bethany—The Scene of the Ascension—A Narrow Escape—The Garden of Gethsemane, . . . pp. 140-161

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING—MORIAH—ZION.

Outline of History—The Measurements of Modern City—The Tower of Hippicus—The Temple—Description of Haram—Mosque of Omar—The Sacred Rock—Theory as to the Tomb of Christ—Muslem Superstitions—The Mosque el Aksa—Solomon's Stables—The Wailing Place—Excavations—A Leper Village—The Cœnaculum and Tomb of David, pp. 162-197

CHAPTER X.

IN THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING—THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—THE ENVIRONS.

The new Russian Quarter—Underground Jerusalem; the Temple Quarries—A Protestant's Notions—The Church of

the Holy Sepulchre—The Stone of Unction—The Holy Fire
—The Centre of the Earth—Chapel of Sorrow, &c., &c., &c.
—Calvary—The Via Dolorosa and its “Stations”—The
Valley of Hinnom—Pool of Siloam—Isaiah’s Tree,

pp. 198-217

CHAPTER XI.

BETHEL—SHILOH—SHECHEM—SAMARIA.

A Painful Incident—A Syrian Storm—Bethel—Abram’s Altar—
Jacob’s Ladder—Jeroboam’s Idolatry—The Site of Ai—The
Land of Ephraim—The Robbers’ Fountain—Shiloh—Samuel
and Eli—Jacob’s Well—Jesus at the Well—Shechem—Ebal
and Gerizim—Samaria—Jenin, . . . pp. 218-243

CHAPTER XII.

ESDRAELON AND ITS SURROUNDINGS—NAZARETH.

The Great Battle Field of Palestine—Armageddon—El-Fûleh
Jezreel—Naboth’s Field—Gideon’s Fountain—Shunem—Scene
of Saul’s Last Battle—Nain—Endor—Nazareth—Holy Places
—A Sermon—Remarkable View, . . . pp. 244-269

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

Cana of Galilee—The Mount of Beatitudes—Tiberias—A Row
on the Lake—Gamala—Mejdel—Khera—Capernaum—
Bethsaida—Chorazin, . . . pp. 270-287

CHAPTER XIV.

FROM GALILEE TO DAMASCUS—CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

Joseph's Well—The Waters of Merom—Dan and its History—
Forest of Bashan—Banias—Mount of Transfiguration—
Castle of Subeibeh—Battle of Keffr Hauwar—Medical
Missions—Scene of St. Paul's Conversion, pp. 288–303

CHAPTER XV.

DAMASCUS TO BEYROUT.

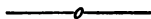
Demetri's Hotel—Bazaars—The House of Rimmon—The Scene
of the Massacre—Statistics—House of Judas—The Old
Wall—Lepers' Hospital—The River Abana—Abila—Tomb of
Abel—Baalbec—Tomb of Noah—Zahleh—On the Diligence
Road—Beyrout—Farewell ! pp. 304–324

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE CAPABILITIES OF PALESTINE, . . .	325
CHRISTIAN WORK IN PALESTINE, . . .	330
TABLE OF SCRIPTURES QUOTED, . . .	334
TABLE OF SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS ALLUDED TO, . . .	336
INDEX,	338



“ON HOLY GROUND.”



I.—J A F F A.

IN the grey dawn of a Sabbath morning in the month of March, I turned out of my berth in eager haste, and wakening my young friends Edwin and Frank, as promised on the previous night, we dressed as rapidly as the rolling of the ship would allow, and went on deck.

(Let me here introduce my two companions. Edwin and Frank were travelling to complete their education. Two more interesting fellows never lived ; they had eyes and ears open for everything, and a fair amount of reading, a shrewd intelligence, and an inveterate determination to gather up information, and to mark, learn, and inwardly digest all they saw and heard, made them very desirable fellow-travellers. Add to this, that they were young, merry, and light-hearted, yet not ashamed of their Christianity, as too many travellers are ; that they had, as it seemed, unlimited letters of credit on their bankers, and yet were not prodigals ; that they knew how to joke as well as the best. and yet knew when and where to stop, and you

have an idea of Edwin and Frank, who, with myself, form the "we" of this volume).

As we stood on the deck of the "Hungaria," one of the finest of the Austrian Lloyd's steamers, very early on that Sabbath morning, there lay stretched out before us, in the far distance, the low coast line of that mysterious and Holy Land we were soon to explore. I cannot tell you what a flood of thoughts rushed through my mind as steadily the ship bore us onwards. The dream of my life was coming true, I should soon be in that land where He dwelt, the echoes of whose divine voice have gone forth to bless and renovate the world; that land towards which the thoughts of all Christians have in all lands been directed through the long ages, and will be on this "day most calm, most bright;" that land which will be the theatre of the great events that are to usher in the end of things created.

The sun rose in a glory of marvellous colouring, and as we neared the coast we could make out some of the "positions" with which, from childhood, we had been familiar. There was Ascalon; there stretched the land of the Philistines; away to the left was Hermon, covered with its glistening mantle of snow; ahead rising from the sea in the shape of an amphitheatre was Jaffa the "beautiful," and beyond, the outline of the Judean hills.

One thing that struck us as remarkable, was the extraordinary clearness of the atmosphere. Among the things that we could make out, for instance, with

the naked eye, was Carmel, fifty or sixty miles away. It is by no means a high hill, but we could distinctly trace its dark line running down to the sea, and far beyond, the ridges of Hermon and the deep shadows on Lebanon were so clearly defined as to make it hard to believe they were more than ten or a dozen miles ahead.

It was interesting to watch the people on board, and try to discover by their words and gestures what were the emotions stirring within them, as they approached these sacred shores. To some, their journey thither was perhaps for a renewal of faith; to some few, for a confirmation of unbelief; to some, it was to visit the King in His own country; to others, it was to worship at the shrines which cruel creeds have imposed to rob the sacred spots of their true solemnity and simple beauty. But to every Christian there must have come a thrill of intense emotion, for behind those blue hills came forth the One of all the universe who understood and revealed the heart of God, and by His life, and words, and sacrificial death, opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

We had on board a large party of pilgrims from Russia, who were going up to Jerusalem to celebrate Easter week. They appeared to have come out without purse or scrip, and were determined to beg, borrow, or steal, as necessity arose. They "camped out" on deck, the women and children under a rough awning (which ran alongside our cabin, and night was made hideous with the constant crying of half-starved

babies) while the men rolled themselves up in their huge blankets and then stowed themselves away on deck, anywhere, everywhere, out of the wind. Dark bread and odoriferous garlick, with some mysterious beverage out of a tin can, seemed to be their principal diet, and a calm indifferent reverie, generally accompanied with tobacco, formed their principal amusement. A party of Germans was also on board ; these had come on a colonising tour, (for where will not the Germans colonize?), and were about to join a party of their fellow-countrymen already settled on the outskirts of Jaffa, to whom a concession had been made by the Government, to cultivate land in the plain of Sharon.

But, more important to Edwin, Frank and myself, we had also on board a party of Mr Cook's Eastern tourists, about forty-five in all, including seven or eight ladies, and these ladies and gentlemen were to be our companions in travel through Palestine and Syria. Amongst them were representatives of all sorts and conditions of men, from the light and frivolous idler to the devout and earnest student. They came from all quarters of the globe; they included four out of the seven ages of man, and of course they represented every phase of character. No educational test had been applied to them before starting by any school board; and while one spoke of the Arabs as a "premature" people, meaning primitive, and of three houses being "contagious" to one another, when he meant contiguous, another could

discourse with the Arab in his own tongue, and read the monumental histories with almost as much ease as he read the newspaper. Some of these individuals will be introduced as I go on with the narrative, but it would be unpardonable were I to omit to say now that there were half a dozen or more "Reverends" among the party, varying from Established Church of England to Primitive Methodists. But more of these, also, as we go on.

At length we came up close under the land, and Jaffa—a vision of beauty, with its white, flat-roofed houses, rising tier above tier on the hill side, and its quay, or rather that which served for one, crowded with picturesque groups—was before us. Every soul on board rushed to the vessel's side to gaze, and to watch the little fleet of boats making towards us from the shore.

As soon as the anchor was let go, between twenty and thirty boats were alongside, each boat containing four or five men, and each man yelling or wrangling at the top of his voice, and when the signal was given we were boarded by these natives, who seized us and our luggage indiscriminately, until we were obliged to discuss the doctrine of free-will with our fists. But the scene at the gangway, who shall describe it? As the natives struggled up, the Russian pilgrims, each eager to be first to plant his foot in the Holy Land, struggled down; crowds of Germans from the town came up to greet their friends and acquaintance on board, and collision upon collision was the conse-

quence. Meanwhile, although it was a lovely morning, there was a considerable swell on, and even in the smoothest weather the landing at Jaffa is dangerous ; the boats were dancing madly by the vessel's side, and it was a miracle of mercy that the earthly pilgrimage of many did not end then and there.

I have a distinct recollection of seeing Edwin and Frank leap over the boiling surge and go down ! (into a boat as I afterwards discovered) and I remember being seized by four black hands, and being cowed into submission by four black eyes gleaming from under two huge white turbans, and I remember going down into seething waters and a tossing cockle shell boat ; and sometime after that standing on *terra firma*, being patted on the back by the four black hands aforesaid and complimented upon my prowess. "You very good mian. Give us Backsheesh !"

I record these words with deep feeling, they were the first I heard in Palestine, and "Backsheesh" (namely a gratuity, a fee, or a "tip,") not the empty compliment, was the real burden of their remark. Backsheesh was sounded in my ears from hour to hour, day by day, from that time forth. It is the Alpha and Omega of Eastern travel ; it is the first word an infant is taught to lisp, the last the old man utters tottering to the grave ; and when I left Palestine after wandering through the land, the last thing I heard as the boat bore me away from its sacred shores was the echo of the cry "Backsheesh !"

The view of Jaffa is excellent from the sea, as I

have said, and gives you the idea of a town well-to-do, well ordered, and planned with care and taste. In whatever part of the world it were to be seen (not merely because it is a town of Scripture, I mean), you would say "what a lovely place!" But immediately upon landing, the spell is broken and all the beauties disappear. The streets are narrow and filthy, with miserable mud houses full of stench and dirt, and the way is infested with beggars who exhibit their repulsive diseases and deformities, and whine out Backsheesh. We passed through the old gate and entered a crowded bazaar, where noisy Arabs were vending articles of food by no means tempting to European tastes, such as dark-brown bread, very husky, sugar canes not over fresh, olives, dried and well-beaten fish, pale sallow-faced looking cheeses, and confections of a more dubious order. It was refreshing to see exhibited amongst these things huge baskets full of fresh gathered oranges and lemons; but the pleasure was dispelled by catching a whiff of some cooked fish reposing in puddles of red colouring-matter.

These things are but trifles, however, and we soon got reconciled to them. The engrossing thought was "We are in Jaffa; in the Holy Land," and then thought flew away into the past, and peopled those streets with different scenes and a different race.

Jaffa—Japha—Yáfa, or Joppa in Scripture, was a flourishing city when the world was young. Some say it is named after Japhet the son of Noah, others

say the name is derived from *Jafel*, beautiful; be-
this as it may, it is a place that has witnessed many
a rough and perilous scene from the days when it
was held by the Phœnicians until the time when it
fell into the hands of the Turks. Many legends
of interest attach to the place; amongst them the
story of the beautiful Andromeda, who was delivered
from the power of the sea-monster (very like a whale),
by the gallant Perseus, is located here, and it is said
by some, but this deponent sayeth not, that the
carcase of this wonderful monster was exhibited
in one of the Pagan Temples here for many ages.
Here the gallant and chivalric Richard I. lay sick,
and rebuilt the walls which the equally gallant and
chivalric Saladin had knocked down.

But never did scene or incident happen at Jaffa
more striking than that which occurred in 1799.
Excuse a quotation from the Guide Book, but it
tells the story crisply.

"On the 4th March 1799, Yâfa was invested by
the French under Napoleon. In two days a breach
was made by the cannon and declared practicable.
The town was carried by storm and delivered over
to all the horrors of war, which never appeared in a
form more frightful. During this scene of slaughter,
a large part of the garrison, consisting chiefly of
Albanians, took refuge in some old Khans, and called
out from the windows that they would lay down
their arms provided their lives were spared; but
otherwise they would fight to the last extremity.

Two officers, Eugène Beauharnais and Crosier, Napoleon's own aides-de-camp, agreed to the proposal, and brought them all disarmed in two bodies, one consisting of 2500 men and the other of 1500. On reaching the head-quarters Napoleon received them with a stern demeanour, and expressed his highest indignation against his aides-de-camp for attempting to encumber him with such a body of prisoners in the famishing condition of his army. The prisoners were made to sit down in the front of the tents, their hands tied behind their backs. Despair was already pictured in every face, for the relentless frown of the general, and the gloomy whispers of the officers could not be mistaken. But no cry was uttered, no semblance of cowardice exhibited. With the calm resignation characteristic of the Muslem spirit and faith they yielded to their fate. Bread and water were served out to them, while a council of war was summoned to deliberate. For two days the terrible question of life or death was debated. Justice, common humanity, were not without their advocates, but savage barbarity under the name of political necessity prevailed. The committee to whom the matter was referred, unanimously reported that they should be put to death, and Napoleon immediately signed the fatal order! They were massacred to a man on the 10th March."

It was on the anniversary of this day that we made our entry into Jaffa, and we could not wonder that

Muslems looked with displeasure upon the visit of any large body of "Christians."

But we have to do in this book more with the sacred than the secular history of the places we are to visit, and interesting as it is to know that we are in the track of Crusaders, and those who are sometimes called "Heroes," it is far more interesting to know that we are treading in the footsteps of Prophets and Apostles.

The prophet Jonah once visited Jaffa. Where he came from I cannot say, (some think from Gath-hepher a town of Lower Galilee ; I have seen his tomb in two places, but this affords no clue), but the word of the Lord came to him, wherever he was, and said, "Arise, go to Nineveh that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah was cherishing evil in his heart, prophet though he was, and probably he did not want Nineveh to repent (Jonah iv. 2). Moreover, he who had been sent to prophesy to Israel felt aggrieved that he should be sent to a foreign and heathen nation. At all events, instead of going towards Nineveh, eastward, he rose up to flee into Tarshish in Spain, westward, "from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa, where he found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

Upon this very shore where we were standing, stood that faithless man, the only prophet who ever con-

cealed the mission God had entrusted to him. He was trying to evade God's presence, the fancied refuge of the sinner in all ages—the plan that best of all succeeds in making a hell upon earth, as banishment from the presence of the Lord makes the hell of the future. We know the sequel. He left that dangerous port, a mighty tempest arose in that calm blue sea yonder, so violent that the ship had to be lightened, and yet remained unmanageable. The sailors knew they had a runaway prophet on board, and that the evil had come upon them for his sake,—“so they took up Jonah and cast him forth into the sea, and the sea ceased from her raging.” They were an honest and kindly-hearted set of fellows, were those sailors, and they threw him forth reluctantly; and, perhaps, as they saw the great fish (which some people still insist must have been a whale) rise up and swallow the struggling man, they thought it was all over with him for ever. But God had other purposes. He who prepared the fish to receive him ordained also that it should disgorge him, probably somewhere on the coast of Palestine, and when the commission, “Arise and go to Nineveh,” came to him a second time, Jonah was made willing in the day of God's power.

We turned from the shore and made our way to a house only a stone's-cast off, which tradition affirms was the habitation of “one Simon, a tanner.” The present house, which is in the possession of the Mussulmans, cannot be the actual building in which

Simon carried on his trade—it is far too modern for that—but it possibly stands on the very spot where Simon's house stood. It is "by the sea-side" (Acts x. 6.) It has still in its court-yard a spring of water, which is essential to the trade of a tanner, and tradition, which has marked out less important sites with accuracy, marks out this as the site of Simon's house, and as having been used for ages subsequently as a tannery. We were quite contented to accept the tradition and in doing so without reserve we had a satisfaction which quibblers could not have had.

We were standing in the place where Peter, that glorious man and servant of God, once lodged; we were brought in contact with the Gospel history, and felt that we stood on holy ground.

We were not long in making our way to the house-top, where we opened our Bibles, and read the story of Peter's vision (Acts x. 9). The flat roofs of Eastern houses are gardens, and praying places, and nurseries for children, and store-rooms, and a hundred other things besides. As an Irish clergyman of our party said, "The most convenient place inside an Eastern dwelling is the roof." They are for the most part composed of sand and chalk dried in the sun, and they have to be kept rolled or beaten with a kind of paviors' club, so that the wet accumulated there may not come through the cracks. The old law for building these roofs is still in force at Jaffa. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon

thine head, if any man fall from thence" (Deut. xxii. 8). I remember seeing in Egypt some children playing upon a high roof without battlements, and I felt that if I were an insurance agent I would ask a tolerably stiff premium upon their lives. The battlements of the houses are frequently made of tubes composed of burnt clay, like small sections of drain-pipes. This makes the roof airy, and people resting there can see through without being seen.

It was on such a roof, on this very spot, that Peter, the Galilean fisherman, looked out upon the "Great Sea." It was here that he had that wondrous vision which taught him the blessed lesson of toleration, and how to receive in love all for whom Christ died. He had lived by a small sea and he had small views; he looked out upon this great sea, and his views were enlarged. He was willing to preach the gospel, not to Jews only, but to every creature!

As we walked on the roof of that house we could look across to the roofs of many other houses. There were some ladies in bright yellow satin dresses, with close black veils, covering all the face except the eyes (this covering of the faces of all the Eastern beauties was a sore trial and source of endless vexation to Edwin and Frank, but they were young, you know), looking at us with evident curiosity from over the battlements of an adjacent house, and they reminded us of a certain noble lady who once lived in Jaffa, not far from where we were. She was not an indolent painted do-nothing, as too many of the Eastern

women of the present day are, but "she was full of good works and alms deeds which she did." (Acts ix. 36-43.) She knew how to use her needle, which is an Eastern accomplishment almost as rare as conversation in Greek is with English ladies. She might have been the superintendent of the Jaffa Ragged School; at all events, many of the poor and ragged blessed her for "the coats and garments which she made." But she fell sick and died, and the disconsolate "saints and widows" sent for Peter, who was staying at Lydda, now called Ludd, "nigh unto Joppa" (only a few miles off, in fact, in the plain of Sharon. You can clearly see it from Joppa). They felt, as Martha and Mary felt, the need of sympathy and comfort, and as they could not have the presence of the Master, they craved for the presence of the Master's friend. Peter came. He went into the room where the dead lady lay robed in the garments of the grave. He kneeled down and prayed, and then turning him to the lifeless body, said, "Tabitha, arise!" And so she who had blessed Jaffa, was recalled from the power of the grave to bless it again, and many believed in the Lord. Peter tarried many days in Jaffa, and surely in those days many a place was consecrated by the little band of disciples who spake often one to another of Jesus, the resurrection and the life.

It is time we came down from the roof of Simon's house, but there is just one other train of recollections that must be indulged. We are looking right down

into the sea ; the waves are plashing and dashing against that reef of rocks where poor Andromeda got so wet. Inside is a little smooth water, and this is called the port. It is an empty compliment, however, to do so. It is dangerous at the best of times, and utterly useless for vessels of any size. The old proverb, "Any port in a storm," does not hold good at Jaffa. Is it not strange that the land destined to hold such an important place in the world's history should never have had one decent port in its long line of coast ? Hiram, King of Tyre, must have had all his work cut out for him in superintending the shipment from Lebanon of all the cedar and pine-wood which was used in the building of the temple ; and, assuming that the port was no better in his days than in ours, the difficulty in landing those mighty beams must have been immense. But Hiram was a man of business, and he said, "We will cut down wood out of Lebanon as much as thou shalt need, and we will bring it to thee in floats by sea to Joppa (and will cause it to be discharged there), and thou shalt carry it up to Jerusalem."—(1 Kings v. 9 ; 2 Chron. ii. 16.)

What has been done can be done, and when the second temple was built the materials were in like manner procured from the same place and landed at the same port. (Ezra iii. 7.)

And now we start off for a tour of the town. Edwin and Frank being hungry, proposed to try all the native dishes in the bazaars. It was a daring adven-

ture ; I trembled for their lives ; and when we sat before a large pan reeking with awful odours, I saw they were tempting Providence by lusting after the flesh-pots. But they did not take much, and a little they did taxed all their nerves to swallow. They turned to some earthenware bowls, which contained *kishtar* (I think that is the name), composed of the cream of buffaloe's milk, scalded ; and this, with a few parched peas, and corn roasted in the fire, completed their meal.

There is nothing to admire in the way of architecture in Jaffa, except it be a large marble fountain covered with inscriptions in Arabic, near to the mosque where all the life of the town seems to centre. The fortifications are poor, and yet better than we have seen in some Eastern towns. We walked on the walls, which were running alive with lizards, attracted on to the stones by the fierce heat of the sun. I incurred the displeasure of some Arab guards by examining the guns, which were not nearly fierce enough to give satisfaction to any connoisseur of modern war implements.

It is curious, in walking through the streets, which are also the sewers, to see the women in dazzlingly white robes picking their way daintily amongst the filth, in yellow or red slippers, going down at heel. All are thickly veiled, and, unlike the women in Egypt and elsewhere, they wear a colored kerchief completely over the face, so that no feature can be seen. Many Bedouins were about

streets, all armed in a most formidable manner, but they seemed good-tempered and quiet enough, and acknowledged any little pleasantry or civility with becoming good manners and some grace. In the market there were very luxuriant vegetables, some of the radishes being as large as carrots.

We went into the prison, where about twenty to thirty people were huddled together in a court, like cattle, secured only by a wooden fence, but a strong guard watched over them, and escape would have been almost impossible. They were all awaiting trial, some for theft, and some for manslaughter and murder. We were given to understand that for theft imprisonment is the punishment, sometimes accompanied with confiscation or fine; and for murder the culprit suffers the penalty of death at Jerusalem.

One of the principal incidents of the day was our introduction into camp life, for we were to spend a month in "tent and saddle," but we were scarcely prepared for the magnificence of the arrangements made for us. The whole body of tourists assembled in the town, and marched off in procession towards the encampment. Then there burst upon us an astounding sight. Twenty-two tents pitched in a grassy plain, surrounded by cactus hedges, and dotted with palm trees; round about were at least a couple of hundred horses, donkeys, and mules, while camp servants, muleteers, and attendants of various grades, had grouped themselves in picturesque positions. As we approached cannons were fired to salute us, two

Arabs advanced, bearing the Union Jack and the Star-spangled Banner, and our dragomans, Alexander Howard and Timoleon Bocoupoli, led the cheers which welcomed us to our camp. It was an animated scene, and one never to be forgotten; the curious dresses, the crowd of strange faces, the noise and bustle of identifying luggage, the neighing and braying of horses and asses; the jargon of tongues, the cracking of horse-dealers' whips, and the novel surroundings of foliage and scenery under the brilliant light and colour of an Eastern sky.

Edwin, Frank, and I, were appointed to a brand new tent marked "No. 8, T. B.," (one of Timoleon's tents); it was made of strong white canvas, lined inside with a pretty figured chintz, and on the top was a fly covering to keep the place cool. The furniture was simple but good, consisting of three iron bedsteads with quilts and clean blankets and linen, a good Turkey carpet spread over the floor, a table with washing bowls and jugs, and coat hooks fastened on leather and strapped round the tent pole.

Having settled ourselves in "our moving homes," we went in the afternoon to visit Miss Arnott's school, where we were to hold our first religious service in the Holy Land. Miss Arnott is doing a great work in her school for girls.* One of the greatest wrongs committed in the East, is the degraded state in which the women are held; they are mere machines, and

* See Chapter xvi.

lead lives of the worst form of slavery. It is to improve the condition of women in the East that Miss Arnott is so zealously labouring, and she is beginning where all great revolutions must begin, with the new generation. It was very interesting in that place, and with those surroundings, to see the bright intelligent faces of some thirty girls all neatly dressed in a well-chosen amalgamation of European and Oriental style, and to hear their fresh young voices sing in their own tongue, the hymn,

Joyfully, joyfully, onward we move,
Bound for the land of blest spirits above,

and then to follow it in a very foreign accent, but very fair English, with that old familiar hymn,

Around the throne of God in Heaven.

There was something sadly solemn to hear, in the pauses of the song, the muezzin's cry from the minaret of a neighbouring mosque, "To prayer, to prayer, O ye believers!"

After joining in the simple and beautiful service of the Church of England, we went into the Greek Church, with its heavy screen of gold work and its pictures of saints with overdone glory round their heads, and here the people were going through what were literally "spiritual *exercises*" with great gusto, stooping to the earth in quick successive bows, touching the pavement with their lips and foreheads, and presenting their bodies, by the Eastern salutation, to that unknown and unrealised deity behind the

heavy screen. Afterwards, a priest came out from the sanctuary, bearing in his hands a massive Bible on the cover of which was a crucifix ; the people crowded round him, kissing the book with a passionate fervour, and then the edge of the priest's garment. It was a sad symbol, that offering of a closed book to the people !

On returning to the camp an engagement awaited us, very inappropriate to the day, but which necessity compelled—we were to select our horses for the long and strange journey before us. It was a tedious job, for many of our party prided themselves upon their knowledge of horse-flesh and wanted to see the paces, count the teeth, and do many things which seemed superfluous to novices.

I made my selection in simple faith ; it was a good looking animal, and, strange to say, without any sores on its back or legs. But half-an-hour after I had made my choice, I asked an Arab on-looker who spoke English, what he thought of it ? whereupon he delivered a prophecy concerning it in these words, "Horse no good ! You have your breakfast, you get on your horse, you go pit pat, pit pat, up down, up down, in ten minute you want your breakfast once more !" A prophecy which was fulfilled to the letter. Nearly all the horses were named ; mine was "Judas Maccabeus," Edwin's was "Abdallah," and Frank's was "Tag-rag-and-bob-tail !"


In the cool of the evening we strolled into the orange groves for which Jaffa is so justly famed.

Unless you have been into an orange-grove you cannot tell what a delicious place it is, and even then, if you have not been into the gardens at Jaffa, you do not know the perfection of orangeries. On some of the trees there were literally hundreds of ripe luscious oranges oval in shape, from ten to fifteen inches in circumference, and the aroma almost intoxicating. Need I tell you that we lingered here helping ourselves and hardly knowing when to stop, until the shades of evening closed around us, and then we retired to our tent, where some of our tourists "like-minded," paid us a visit, and offered up evening incense in the form of tobacco.

The murmuring of the sea as it rippled on to the shore, the cry of the tree frog, and the challenge of the Arabs who guarded our tents, were the last sounds we heard as we fell asleep and closed our first day in the Holy Land.



II.—SHARON—RAMLEH—AJALON.

T dinner on the previous day our dragoman, Alexander, had given the programme for the morrow. Tim-tom at six. Breakfast at seven. Horseback at eight. What tim-tom might be we did not know, but we knew in the morning, and every morning while we were in Palestine. A procession of half-a-dozen attendants with gongs, whistles, and other hideous instruments, marched round from tent to tent, and had the Seven Sleepers been amongst us I believe they would have started up simultaneously. Tim-tom gave no uncertain sound; it meant get up without delay, and woe to the lazy one who turned over on his side to dream that he was dressing. Twenty minutes after the signal to rise had been given, ruthless hands were pulling up the tent-pins, and the loose canvas was flapping around us; for everything has to be packed up and fitted to the mules' backs by the time we are ready to mount, a stupendous work which does not allow a moment's breathing time to the workers. The dragomans superintend this, and they do it with a whip in their hands, with which they mercilessly lash any of the muleteers who wish to argue, or who show

disinclination to work. This is a hateful practice, and called forth many protests, but before we had been a month in Syria we were so used to it,—and we were forced to confess that in the existing state of things it seemed so necessary,—that we began to grow hardened and to look at it with indifference.

I should have liked all my best friends to have seen our wonderful procession move off on that bright March morning. There were 120 horses and mules, 45 muleteers, 18 camp servants, 40 odd tourists, and 4 dragomans and sub-dragomans. Alexander and Timoleon, in boots up to the thighs, loose Turkish trousers, flowing bernouses, and gaily coloured head-gear, armed to the teeth with pistols and swords, tore up and down on their fleet Arab steeds, and inspired us with the emotions of Crusaders going up to do mighty deeds under the shadow of the walls of Jerusalem.

All Jaffa turned out to see us start, and as we passed through the busy, dirty, crowded thoroughfare, mobs of people lined the way, and some asked for backsheesh, while others bade us God-speed. We were all in a state of pleasurable excitement, and felt for the nonce like mighty men of valour, simply from the novelty of the situation. Even "Judas Maccabeus" entered into the spirit of the thing; he "advanced backwards" for a considerable space, endeavoured to chase his tail after the manner of a festive cat, upset a sherbet stall in the attempt, got thrashed for his pains, and then walked on a sadder but a wiser horse.

We passed by the wonderful orange groves, smelling most refreshingly in the pure morning air, and paused to look at the "German Colony." The colony was founded by a party of Americans who guessed they could make the land flow with milk and honey without much trouble or expense. They failed signally, and when the "Quaker City" visited Jaffa, it took away with it the bulk of the colonists to Egypt. But there they had no visible means of support, and a countryman commiserating their misfortunes paid their passage back to America. A party of Germans then "jumped the claim" deserted by the Americans, and, as far as I could ascertain, were doing well. They were able to offer sufficient inducements to a fresh party of their countrymen to join them as already narrated, and their neat white houses, well cultivated fields, and prolific orange gardens, betokened prosperity. The contrast between the work of the Germans and that of the Arabs or Turks is very striking, the latter being quite contented to allow their trees and plants to take care of themselves, merely protecting them with a fence of prickly pear (*Cactus opuntia*) which grows from fifteen to eighteen feet high, and is a formidable defence indeed.

Passing under the shadow of these hedges we come out into the plain of Sharon. A vast tract of slightly undulating country is before us, nearly all under cultivation, with here and there glimpses of orchards or groves of olives.

There is not, as far as I am aware, any great

historical interest linked with the Plain of Sharon. David's flocks were fed here under the care of "Shitrai the Sharonite" (1 Chron. xxvii. 29), and to-day the flocks of the Bedouin may be seen wandering in search of pasturage, while the black tents of these wild sons of the wilderness inspire interest akin to that which any vivid memorial of antiquity produces. It is interesting too, to remember that this has been the great thoroughfare to Jerusalem in all ages. The materials for the Temple were all carried along this road ; prophets and apostles have ridden across this flowery plain, and the feet of myriad crusaders have trodden it.

It has been sung in the poetry of sorrow and of joy. The voice of despair has cried, "The earth mourneth and languisheth, Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down, Sharon is like a wilderness," (Isa. xxxiii. 9). But the voice of hope has been heard saying, "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad ; the excellency of Carmel and Sharon they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." (Isa. xxxv. 1, 2).

We sought diligently for the "Rose of Sharon," but whether we found it or not is very doubtful. Warburton says the plain "is sprinkled with the Iris, wild tulip, and almost every flower except its own peculiar rose." Others say it is the meadow saffron, anemone, marsh mallow, narcissus, ashphodel lily, "Saviour's blood drops," and half a dozen others, all of which abound here. So each selected according to his tastes, and the controversialists of our party culled each a

different sort, which exactly proved a theory long held by each.

The road from Jaffa to Jerusalem is a tolerably good one for a land which is proverbial for having no

at a systematic "pit-a-pat ;" ascending with each step the same distance he advanced, occasionally pausing to look me full in the face, or take a bite at my leggings. Once when I was indulging in pleasant reverie, one of our dragomans dashed past on a fleet Arab steed, at a swinging pace. Judas pricked up his ears and followed. I could not hold him back, the girths, which I had not looked to before starting, were slack, one stirrup was longer than the other ; and so, swaying on one side, my saddle went under the belly of the horse, and I licked the dust. I was humiliated but unhurt. "Judas" evidently considered that he had triumphed gloriously, and endeavoured to take mean advantages of my defeat.

We came to our first halt at Ramleh (*sand*), supposed by some to be the site of Arimathea, where dwelt that disciple who gave the grave "wherein never man lay," for the burial of our Lord (Matt. xxvii. 57). It is a decent little town, and cleaner than many, and has a few ruins of the time of the Crusades. In those days Ramleh was an important place, and many a scene of blood have the old walls witnessed. There is a Latin convent here, one of the largest in Syria, where many travellers rest and pay for it. The monks affirm that Nicodemus dwelt where their new church now stands, and that he was a near neighbour to Joseph. But this our "controversialists" denied ; they would have denied that Nicodemus and Joseph lived on any site that might have been pointed out, but if any rash person had shut these two good men

out of the country altogether, who would have been more grieved than they? So we decided in favour of its being the very place where they lived, no proof to the contrary being forthcoming, and pictured to ourselves those two timorous disciples journeying together along that flower-marked road, which we could see winding away in the distance, and endeavoured to hear some of their remarks as they talked of the "man that doeth many miracles," and of the difficult question which had come before them in the Sanhedrim for discussion :—"If we let Him alone all men will believe on Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

The principal attraction at Ramleh is a magnificent tower of Saracenic origin, and we were not long in making our way up the 126 steps which lead on to a balcony at the top. The view from here is splendid, and to me it was a moment of special gratification, for I had read so often the statements of travellers that there is nothing very grand or very beautiful in all Palestine, and had always instinctively rebelled against these statements. Here, was a flat contradiction of them to my mind. The view from the top of this tower is magnificent. North and south, is spread the great fertile plain carpeted with flowers and rich with colours; away to the west, is the "Great Sea," and to the east, are "the mountains of Israel." Here and there on gentle undulations little white villages are nestling amidst luxuriant vegetation, and down below are the groves and gardens of Ramleh.

“Beautiful as vast, and diversified as beautiful, the eye is fascinated, the imagination enchanted,” writes the author of the “Land and the Book,” in describing this scene.

It was among the ruined buildings at the foot of this tower that our luncheon was spread, and where, in the heat of the day we reposed for a couple of hours to read, and talk, and think, and to feel as happy as ever travellers felt; one with a Bible, another with a map, and a third with a guide book. Some of the villagers came out to look at us, and those who had any kind of sore or deformity exhibited it and demanded backsheesh. Many beggars had been passed upon the road, many an Æneas anxious for cure, and I observed that the principal form of deformity about here is in the hands and arms, and the principal disease ophthalmia.

A traveller records a conversation with an Arab, when passing through this part of the country, and as it shows the sentiment which keeps the races in the East in the same position they were ages and ages ago, I transcribe it here. The Arab in question was going to Jerusalem, but instead of tarrying at Ramleh close at hand, he turned aside, and went to Ludd some miles out of his way. On being interrogated by the traveller as to his motive for doing this, he spake in these words:—

“We sons of Arabs still retain the traditions of our Bedouin life. Because our tents are not made of stone, because our encampments are no longer

shifted from the spots we have selected, have we ceased to be children of the desert, and ought we to disavow our ancestors? When they arrived in this country, blessed by God and dear to all the prophets, they had long been divided into two great factions, the *Kayssi*, the sons of Kays-Ibn-Shaylan, and the *Yemeni*, who came from Yemen. We, their descendants, inhabitants of towns and villages, are still Kayssi or Yemeni, according as the chain of our ancestry or the connexion of our alliances attaches us to one or other of the two parties. Young people may despise old notions if they will; it is of no use; there will always be Kayssi and Yemeni. In vain are the lips of the old wound closed, the scar will never disappear. I, a Kayssi, greatly prefer to lodge with my own people at Ludd, than to receive the hospitality of the men of Ramleh, who are Yemeni."

Is it, then, an implacable hatred which divides the two branches of the Arab family? asked the traveller.

"No, it is not hatred; in the presence of foreigners we do not forget that we are brethren. But in all our internal quarrels, from canton to canton, from village to village, there is always at bottom the trace of the original separation. It is the order of God. He wills that it should be eternally maintained since he has stamped it upon our most pacific customs. When a daughter of Ludd, who is a Kayssi, espouses a son of Ramleh, who is a Yemeni, she is conducted by her relations as far as the limit of the territory, covered with a red veil, which is the favourite colour

of Kays. There the cortége is met by the friends of the bridegroom, who drag away the bride with pretended violence over the frontier of Ramleh, after throwing a white veil over her head, the symbol of her adoption by the Yemeni. This custom is as ancient as our race; and, in spite of the levity of young people now-a-days, I hope that it will yet last as long as it has already lasted. Are we better than our fathers that we should act differently to them?"

No wonder that progress is a word unknown in the East, when old grievances and meaningless customs are hugged with such tenacity.

After our grateful rest, we resumed our journey on a road not so good as that on which we travelled in the morning. Illustrations of Scripture were to be gathered by the observant at every point. Look, for instance, at that man ploughing yonder field. His plough is of two poles, which cross each other at the ends near to the ground. One pole is fastened to the yoke and is used for drawing, the other is used by the driver as a ploughshare at one end, and a handle at the other. Only one handle; and one thinks of the saying, "no man having put his *hand* to the plough and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven," (Luke ix. 62). In his other hand he carries a long spear, or goad, with a sharp point for touching up the oxen. It is seven or eight feet long with a sort of spade at the other end for seraping the dirt off the plough. It is no use for the refractory oxen to raise their heels when the goad touches them, the driver is safely behind the plough

and out of reach. One thinks of that saying to Saul of Tarsus, "it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks, *i.e.*, goads," (Acts ix. 5), and of "Shamgar, the son of Anath, which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox goad, and he also delivered Israel," (Judges iii. 31). Look at the land which the man is ploughing, it has no hedge or fence, a few heaps of stones mark out his boundary. I would guarantee to scatter all those stones in an hour, but I should bring down upon my head this crushing penalty, "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark, and all the people shall say, Amen," (Deut. xxvii. 13). When Ruth went gleaning in the field after the reapers, she had no hedges and ditches to scramble over; she only passed a boundary of stones in a large field, similar to these in the plain of Sharon, "and her hap was to light on *a part of the field* belonging unto Boaz." (Ruth ii. 3). This is but a specimen of the trains of association which are started by the merest incident and circumstances of travel, and time would fail to tell of a tithe of such Scriptural illustrations as a day's journey in Palestine will call to mind.*

The road along which we were travelling was once so much infested with robbers that it was unsafe to go past it unless well armed and guarded; even now it is not famous for the reformation in character of certain ruffianly individuals who are to be found

* See Professor Hackett's "Illustrations of Scripture."

skulking about. In witness whereof, let me narrate a personal incident. My saddle being exceeding hard, and "Judas Maccabeus" much inclined to "pit-a-pat," I dismounted and walked, and, as the sun was baking hot, I threw my coat over the horse, although Timoleon warned me to keep a sharp eye upon it, but for this I saw no necessity, as there was no sign of a human being, except of our own party, about, and the road had steep rocky banks on either side. For some time I strolled on, the last of the party, with the reins in one hand and "Murray" in the other, and turning round occasionally to see that Judas and the coat were all right. Five minutes after I had looked, I looked again, and lo! my coat was not. I looked down the road, which lay straight behind me for a mile—it was not upon it. And that coat contained all my return tickets through Europe, boat passes on the Mediterranean, hotel coupons, and letters of credit on bankers. I was staggered; but at that moment I caught sight of two men, armed to the teeth, clambering up the steep bank of the road side. I left Judas to his fate, and made after them. They stood with a suspicious look close together as I approached, and vainly tried to show unconcern. But there I found my coat hidden between them, and I lost no time in snatching it away and giving them my mind in rather loud English. As they did not ask for backsheesh I knew the villains had robbed me with premeditation. If I had known what I afterwards discovered, that an Arab never strikes back when

ears, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon! And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." (Josh. x. 13). It seemed a sin to go to bed on such a night as that, the multitude of the heavenly host was abroad, it seemed "not day, nor night, but it came to pass that at evening time it was light." The clear atmosphere enabled us to see *beyond* the moon and the stars: that is to say, we had been accustomed to see them in our denser atmosphere as though they were shining through or adhering to the blue canopy of heaven, but here in this eastern sky, they were hanging in the heavens like silver lamps. Every star was globular, and looked as stars look when seen through a telescope. The effect was marvellous, and never until then had I realized the awful grandeur of a starry night. Who could help saying aloud, "The heavens declare thy glory, O God, and the firmament showeth thy handiwork; when I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?"



III.—KIRJATH-JEARIM—KOLONIEH— RACHEL'S TOMB.

THE night spent in the valley of Ajalon would not have been so sleepless for the inmates of "No. 8 T. B.," had it not been for a camel which lay down close beside the tent and gurgled and grunted in that melancholy and half-hysterical manner in which camels are wont to indulge. Nor would sleep have been less difficult to court, had the jackals which abound in this neighbourhood only have kept their own counsel instead of howling it out. It was interesting to remember the family connections of these said jackals, descended no doubt from those which Samson caught and tied tail to tail to spoil the crops of the Philistines, but it is far pleasanter to have these remembrances in the day-time than in the dead of night.

By seven o'clock in the morning the Canvas Town in the vale of Ajalon was gone, and we were on our pilgrimage. I gave up my horse to one of the attendants in order to enjoy the luxury of a good walk in the delicious morning air over the hill country of Judah. And a tolerably stiff walk it was, as I did

not come to a halt until above fourteen miles had been accomplished. I say "about fourteen miles," for it is rather hard to tell distance in Palestine, as it is reckoned by hours and not by miles. In the country you say, "How far is it to so-and-so?" "Three hours," is the reply; or if in the city to a place close at hand, "It is five minutes off, or ten minutes from here," as the case may be. Average travelling is estimated at three miles an hour, and eight hours is considered a day's journey. One of the tourists, stiff like myself from yesterday's riding, joined me in my walk, and as it was through places memorable for many remarkable events, the time passed cheerfully enough, and we had no difficulty in keeping ahead of our caravan.

We could have imagined ourselves walking in Scotland or North Wales, except that from the rocky hills around us there grew the fig, and the olive, and the bay tree; and except that here and there we saw huge hills of stone like lightning-struck pyramids, or barren desolate ridges, which still, however, showed the outlines of terraces where once the vine and the fig had flourished. But I have erred in saying we might have imagined ourselves in Scotland or North Wales. Every yard of road is sacred with associations, and every mile of road introduces a scene as different from the last mile as Scotland differs from Italy. The panorama passing before the eye is almost as rapid as that passing before the mind. I was particularly struck

with this in one part of the day's journey. Every thing around us was desolate; not a blade of grass nor leaf of tree to be seen, a wild region such as you might look for in Iceland; so desolate that one instinctively buttoned up the coat as if it ought to be cold, although it was tropically hot; so desolate that one felt after weapons of defence although not a sign of life was within view. My companion talked of "the land flowing with milk and honey," with a half sneer, and expressed pity for any hungry grasshopper that might chance to come that way. But in less than an hour's time we stood upon a hill-top under a grove of fine old olives; a rill of water trickled at our feet; the mossy bank was rich with various flowers; we looked down upon a valley all dressed in living green, and onward to a range of hills clothed to the top with verdure, while away in the distance sparkled the sunlit waters of the Mediterranean. I have travelled through many lands in both hemispheres, but never have I seen such rapid and complete transitions in scenery. The remembrance of this throws a light upon much that is otherwise obscure. David was no traveller, and I have wondered after reading some traveller's descriptions of Palestine, wherever he got those marvellous photographic views from of the grand and the beautiful, seeing that, according to some, Palestine never was, and never could have been, either the one or the other. But David, according to the mood he was in, could leave his home at Bethlehem,

and in an hour or two be in wild and desolate regions, amid rocks, and caves, and precipices, or in the smiling fields and fragrant groves, or in the heart of the city. We cannot tell what influence scenery had upon the character of Samson, certainly he was a man of many moods, and as we journeyed on this day through some of the scenes of his exploits, we could not fail to notice that he had the daily opportunity of seeing nature in her many moods.

It is by no means an original remark to say that Palestine differs from all other countries in the nature of its scenery, and has a "style," if I may so say, peculiarly its own, but it is a remark worthy of all acceptance, and if some astute student were to take the pains to read some of the stories of Scripture characters with especial reference to the surroundings of such individuals, probably much light would be thrown upon many phases of thought and feeling with which we have hitherto been unacquainted.

Coming forth from a wild glen we saw before us a city set on a hill, as so many are in Palestine. It is "the city of grapes," *Kuryet el Enab*, but this name has no interest in it to compare with that it anciently bore of Kirjath-Jearim. At a little distance it looks a beautiful village, but the nearer you get to it the more its beauty vanishes. So, stand here a while, under the shadow of this old olive, and recall a few of its associations. Look at it as its ancient inhabitants, the Gibeonites, cluster together with fear on every face, for have they not heard that the mighty Joshua

is subduing all the land before him in the name of the God of Israel? See the smile creeping over the tearful countenances of some, as a brave band, whose motto is "All's fair in love and war," come up to them to receive a "God-speed" and pass out of the city "with sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles old and rent and bound up, and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them, and all the bread of their provision dry and musty." In this way they journey to Joshua at Gilgal, representing that they had come from "a very far country," and Joshua, his heart melted at the sight of those old clothes and bottles and shoes, made a league with them, to let them and their people live. So Joshua was entrapped, for he soon discovered that they were near neighbours. However, for his oath's sake, he let them live, but he made them hewers of wood and drawers of water, or slaves, to the whole congregation thenceforth for ever, (Josh. ix.).

Or look at Kirjath-Jearim on that day when the wondering people saw a procession drawing near from Beth-shemesh, and halt on the hill at the house of Abinadab. See how reverently and timidly they draw near, for that mysterious affair on the cart is the Ark of God, which had brought such calamities on the villagers of Beth-shemesh. It is deposited in the house of Abinadab, and there it remained for twenty years (1 Sam. vii. 2), until David gathered all Israel together "from Shihor of Egypt, even unto the entering of Hemath, to bring the ark from Kirjath-Jearim

(1 Chron. xiii. 5, 6). Never was there such a day as that in the picturesque village before. It was the beginning of Israel's glory, and no wonder that "David and all Israel played before God with all their might, with singing and with harps, and with psalteries and cymbals and trumpets." If we could only catch the echoes as the vast procession moves down the steep hill we might perhaps hear these words—

"Lo ! we heard of it at Ephratah,
We found it in the fields of the woods,*
We will go into His tabernacles,
We will worship at His footstool.
Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest ;
Thou, and the Ark of Thy strength."

Ps. cxxxii. 6, 8.

Entering now the village we see but little to admire. The houses are dirty, the people are uninteresting, and do not make you feel you would like them for bosom friends. Probably some of them are descendants of Abu Ghaush, or Abou Gosch, who once lived here. He was a thief and a robber and a murderer of the deepest dye. He held the pass hard by, and many a deed of butchery stained his hands and his soul. Cut-throats and bandits were his men-at-arms, and when they could not beguile their time with daring deeds in the wild glens through which the travellers to and from Jerusalem must pass, they would amuse themselves by such acts as roasting a little band of

pious Franciscan monks in an oven, or some other hideous atrocities.

It has been affirmed by certain monks that the prophet Jeremiah was born in this town, but we did not shed a tear to his memory, as there was considerable fear of dropping it in the wrong place, not a vestige of evidence being forthcoming to prove this to be his birth-place. The absence of this evidence took away from the interest of a visit to an old Gothic church with which his name is associated. This church must have been a very fine one in its day, probably it was a church and a fortress as well; the walls and roof are still standing, and it seems at first sight only to want cleaning and to put pews and a collection-box in it, to make it ready for use. But it would require much cleaning; its occupants when I entered were a few cocks and hens and a devotional-looking cow just getting up from her knees. While I was reading an account of the church in Murray, up came the dragomans with "the tourists," and instead of dismounting as they no doubt would have done had they been sure about Jeremiah, they rode in on horseback, and the sight of forty odd ladies and gentlemen on horseback in a place of worship had an imposing and curious effect. It was a kind of religious Astley's.

I am not certain whether this church was built by the Empress Helena (Constantine's mother) or not. Edwin and Frank were of opinion that it probably was, as she appears to have built anywhere, everywhere, all over the land. Whenever they were in

doubt as to the origin of anything, from a heap of stones to the capital of a column, they always pointed it out as the work of the "inveterate Helena," as a recent traveller has well styled her.

The next place of interest on the road was Kolonieh. Did not our hearts burn within us as we came near to this little place? Perhaps we were standing on the spot where the two disciples stood who had walked from Jerusalem on that sad and joyful day when the Stranger drew nigh to them and said, "What communications are these that ye have one with another as ye walk and are sad?" Perhaps it was here their hearts sank as they saw Him "make as though He would have gone further." Perhaps it was here that they knew Him by the breaking of bread, and then started up in blank astonishment as that mysterious spiritual body vanished out of their sight (Luke xxiv. 13-31).

Such were my thoughts and feelings as I drew nigh to Emmaus. But I am bound to say that authorities differ as to whether Kolonieh can be identified with Emmaus. Some, as I have already said, have placed it at Nicopolis, which is too far off; others at Kirjath-Jearim, and others here, although they are met with the objection that it is not quite far enough from Jerusalem to meet the requirements of the Scripture texts. Happily I was not well up at the time in these different objections, and having luckily escaped the controversies upon the road, I was able to enjoy these associations, and did so in simple faith for once,

without the fear of Robinson, or Thomson, or Porter before my eyes.

Only a few minutes' walk from this place is a stone bridge, and looking over it we could see just a line of damp stones in the bed of the stream, which indicated that water had been there. It is by no means certain when this stream is to be seen to perfection, but at the best of times it can never be very much to boast of. Sometimes, however, when the weary cavalcade is on its way from Jaffa to Jerusalem, it is no small disappointment to find just a few wet stones where abundance of water for man and beast had been anticipated. We got down under the bridge, and then walked in the bed of the brook. It was not a difficult task to people the banks on either side with two opposing armies, one of the Philistines and one of the Israelites, nor to picture on one side consternation and distress, notwithstanding the glitter and the pomp, for on the other side the valley there walks a giant, "the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam, and his spear's head weighed six hundred shekels of iron" (1 Sam. xvii. 7.) This ten-feet-four giant was the terror of Israel, for daily he walked forth, and his trumpet-voice rang across this brook, challenging Israel to find a man to meet him in single combat. You know the story, and you may guess with what a new delight, as we sat in a shady spot in the river-bed, we read how, perhaps just where we were, the stripling David "chose him five smooth stones out of the brook" (1 Sam. xvii. 40), and went forth armed with these

and with earnest faith in God, and slew the giant. As we read, we almost listened to hear the great shout of the Israelites, which the hills bounding the plain on which they were encamped echoed back, and almost expected to look up and see the pell-mell flight of the Philistines as they fled towards "Shaaraim, Gath, and Ekron."

In those days the valley was celebrated for its terebinths (whence its name, Elah). They are still to be found here, but the acacia is more abundant, and it is now called Wady es Sumt, or Acacia Valley. It is really wonderful that any stones remain in the river bed, for our party took away no fewer than 215, that is to say, each of the tourists "chose him five smooth stones out of the brook," determined in some degree at least to imitate good David, whose psalms they so often had sung.

After a good luncheon and a long rest, at Kolonieh, both very grateful after the walk, which had grown somewhat fatiguing towards the end, as it was in the fierce heat of the day, our cavalcade moved on, and I again mounted Judas.

Soon after starting we ascended a very steep hill, rather like the side of a house, and were at the commencement of a very desolate region. From this hill we could see many historic places of great interest, such as the general outline of the country which Samson has rendered famous by his exploits; and Gibeon, where the public worship of the nation was celebrated while Solomon's Temple was being built;

Neby Samwil, the tomb of Samuel; the tower from whence the Crusaders first caught sight of the Holy City, and a hundred other objects, all of which we should have been delighted to visit, but they lay out of our course, and in this book I propose only to describe the places I visited and carefully examined.

As we passed along the desolate region already referred to, we saw a curious procession coming towards us. It consisted of fifteen or twenty men linked together with strong ropes attached to their wrists and ankles, and marched before an armed body of Turkish soldiers. Behind them followed a straggling crowd of women, old men, and children, weeping and wailing in that passionate manner which is so strangely affecting to northern ears, and as our cavalcade came up they broke out into a storm of supplication, in the hope that we might have the power and the will to relieve them. At first we were under the impression that they were banditti captured and being led to punishment, but it turned out that they were conscripts, and were about to leave home and family, perhaps for years, perhaps for ever.

To beguile the monotony of the way, a few of us who were familiar with *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, and who could manage to sustain a part, reined in together and sang the songs of Zion, as we journeyed with our faces thitherward. We did not know how near we were to the Holy City, and were in the midst of singing "Jerusalem the Golden," when we saw the horsemen in advance galloping up a piece of rising

ground, and then all hats were raised as they brought their horses to a stand and gazed on the City of the

the great Russian convent, that if during this year as many more should be added, the view of Jerusalem from this approach will be completely shut out, and the traveller will not know his whereabouts until he is close under the walls.

There is no doubt that the very worst approach to the city, apart from these modern innovations, is that from the Jaffa road, and I wondered at the raptures of travellers who have described it as though it were the finest view in Palestine. Heartily glad was I, therefore, that we had determined before starting not to enter the city this way, but to pay some other visits first, and then enter it from the Mount of Olives. While the clericals lingered, and cavilled as they lingered, each apparently determined to oppose the other, who made out, or fancied he made out, some sacred site, I urged on Judas, glad to get away from their discordant talk and my more discordant feelings.

Turning to the right from the Jaffa road, Jerusalem was soon left behind, and when I joined Edwin and Frank, I felt gratified to know that they had experienced a revulsion of feelings similar to my own. So we looked out for fresh objects of interest, and soon pulled up at the Convent of Elias. A high wall prevented us from seeing much of the convent, but we saw the great curiosity of the place, which is a smooth piece of rock opposite the gate cut out somewhat like one of the recesses on Waterloo Bridge. Examining this minutely it is found to have certain

depressions in it such as, were the rock sand, which it is not, would be left by a human body reclining there. It was here, says that jade Tradition, that Elijah lay when he fled from the wicked Jezebel, but why he chose such an uncomfortable spot, or why he should have slept so *heavily* as to have left an impression in stone, tradition does not declare. The convent belongs to the Greeks, but the Mahommedans also take an interest in this place at the gate, and assert that Mahomed left the impression of his sacred foot on the same stone, but I quite forget on what occasion.

Looking across a deep valley on our left, we had from this spot a splendid view of Bethlehem, as gratifying as our view of Jerusalem had been disappointing. We needed no dragoman to say "That is Bethlehem," any more than a stranger to London needs to be told "That is St Paul's." A hundred photographs and pictures had stamped it on our memories, and it came up—in the distance—to the ideal I had formed of what Bethlehem should be. There it stood, on the summit of a hill rich in vegetation, with its square buildings covered with rounded tops like inverted basins, and surrounded with hills, some wild and some under good cultivation. Doubtless the city appeared to the Wise Men of the East very much as it appeared to us to-day, and as we overtook a string of camels journeying thither, it made the scene more realistic; we could fancy those gaily-robed Arabs were the Wise Men taking their offerings to present at the feet of the new-born King.

It is somewhere about here that a well is shown and a legend is associated with it, very pretty but not very authentic. The Wise Men were upon this road on their way to Bethlehem; they had just left the presence of Herod, and they knew not which way to go; weary with their journey they were stooping to draw water, when lo! they saw the star reflected in the well, and they went forth under its guidance until it stood over where the young child was.

Half an hour's journey from Mar Elias brought us to a spot where we were glad to halt and sit down and think. Beside the road there is a plain and shabby building, modern and Moslem, and covered with the everlasting dome. The walls within and without are scribbled over, and at first sight one might have thought it was the private residence of "John Smith, Wolverhampton," or "Edward Harley, New York," these "gentlemen" having tried to immortalise themselves in lampblack. This habit, snobbish as it is stupid, is annoying even in such places as Switzerland and the Rhine, but to see it carried into classic and holy places is simply unbearable.

The building of which I speak is Rachel's Tomb, and under its shadow, on a grassy patch I sat down and read the tender and touching story of how she journeyed from Bethel to this place on the way to Bethlehem. "And there was but a little way to come to Ephrath,"—not more than a mile, it can be seen distinctly from where I sat. But it was not to be;

the journey of life can never pass, even by one mile, God's boundary line, and Rachel had finished her course. "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day" (Gen. xxxv. 1-20). A sad ending to one of the sweetest love-stories of the Bible. In wooing her, seven weary years "seemed to Jacob but a few days for the love he bore her;" and we can hear the broken voice and see the quivering frame of the old man, years afterwards when he himself was drawing to the grave, as he tells again the sad story. "And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan, in the way when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem" (Gen. xlviii. 7).

A very short distance from here is a site which is pointed out as Rama. There are any number of Rama's in Palestine, and the name may be used of any place on a hill. But it was here, or very near here, that the Massacre of the Innocents occurred, for the slaughter was not confined to Bethlehem, but spread "to all the coasts thereof," and this site being only a mile off must certainly have been included. It was here, then, or somewhere close handy, that "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not" (Matt. ii. 18). It is interesting to note the

harmony of the Scriptures in this funeral dirge. Rachel (*ewe*) was a lover of children; so passionate was her love that she said "Give me children, or I die." Her request was granted, but it was a fatal one, for it came to pass that in giving birth to her son, who, "as her soul was departing," she called "the son of my sorrow" (but Jacob called him Benjamin), she died. And when the mothers in Israel were in their deep woe, Rachel stands forth as their typical representative.

There are many tombs around the sepulchre of Rachel; one, a deep hole among rocks, was full of skulls and bones, and no doubt this is a favourite burying-place, for it is one of the most undisputed spots in Palestine. The guide-book says, "It is one of the few shrines which Moslems, Jews, and Christians agree in honouring, and concerning which their traditions are identical."

There was one other train of recollections to be indulged in at this place, but I will not inflict them in full. Saul, "a choice young man and a goodly," when he came from the presence of Samuel, who had just anointed him king, passed this way, for was it not told him, "When thou art departed from me to-day, thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah, and they will say to thee that the asses which thou wentest to seek are found, and lo! thy father hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for thee, saying, What shall I do for my son?" (1 Sam. x. 2).

Our way now lay over a steep and rocky road, very dangerous in some places (it was marvellous how the horses picked their way over smooth slabs of slippery stone), and then we came to our halting-place for the night, beside an old khan, close to the Pools of



IV.—THE POOLS OF SOLOMON—HEBRON.

THERE is an old khan by the Pools of Solomon with castellated walls, and a favourite camping place is the one where our tents were pitched, close beside the Kasr-el-Burak. An English nobleman with his party were encamped beside us, and the scene was a very lively one with the double retinues and tent arrangements. It was satisfactory to see, too, by contrast, how well we were dealt with as a tourist party, for whereas the English nobleman and his friends were dining on cold meat and inferior bread, we had the usual courses of soup, fish, hot joints, and poultry, followed by pastry and dessert. Moreover, we carried our hotel with us, which the others did not, so that those who wished could call for Bass's ale, or sherry, or any other wine or spirit on the carte, and lo! it was there. I do not think a detail of what one eats or drinks is usually interesting, but it will, in this instance, surprise many to know that such fare as I have described—cooked, too, in a manner which would have done credit to a first-class hotel—was the usual programme all through our pilgrimage.

A short stroll from the camp brought us to the far-

famed pools. They are three enormous cisterns of marble masonry, and their measurements are as follows :—

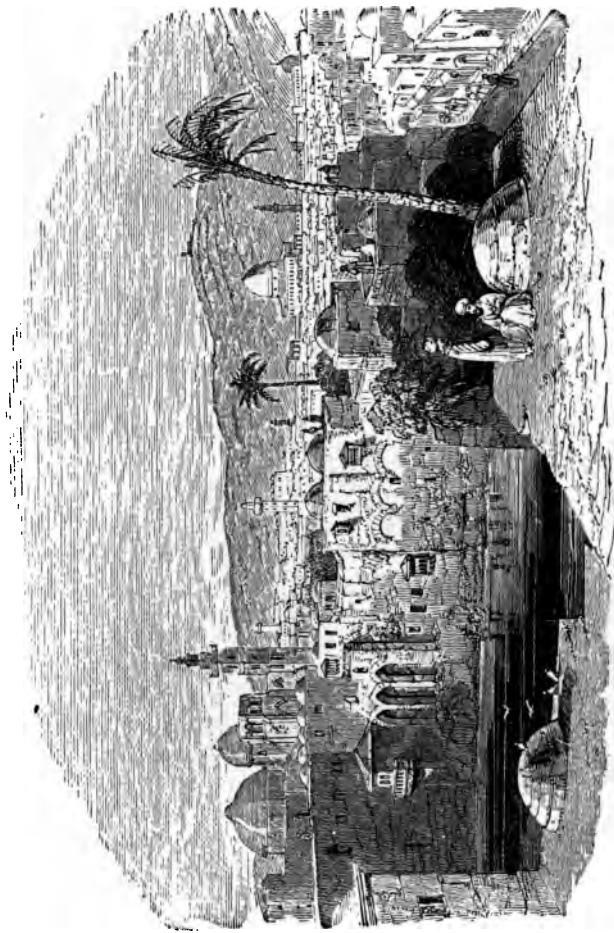
"*Lower Pool*.—Length, 582 feet. Breadth, east end, 207 feet ; west, 148 feet. Depth at east end, 50 feet. (Dr Thomson says that 'when full it would float the largest man of war that ever ploughed the ocean.')

"*Middle Pool*.—Distance above lower pool, 248 feet. Length, 423 feet. Breadth, east end, 250 feet ; west end, 160 feet. Depth at east end, 39 feet.

"*Upper Pool*.—Distance above middle pool, 160 feet. Length, 380 feet. Breadth, east end, 236 feet ; west end, 229 feet. Depth at east end, 25 feet."*

It was hard to believe at first sight that they had not been constructed within the last fifty years, in such splendid preservation are they, but there can be little doubt that they date from Solomon's time, although they were restored by Pontius Pilate.

In old time these pools supplied water to Jerusalem, and the course of the aqueduct can still be traced all the way to the Haram or court of the Temple, a distance of twelve to fourteen miles. At present I believe it conveys water only as far as to Bethlehem. A short distance from here are the Gardens of Solomon, and even now, although a curse has rested on the land, and it has been left desolate, there are sufficient proofs of its fertility under proper cultivation to give one an idea of some of the magnificence



Solomon's Pool.—*On Holy Ground*, p. 56.



of the gardens in the days of that magnificent king. It was to this place he was referring when he said, "I made me great works, I builded me houses. I planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me *pools of water* to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees" (Eccles. ii. 4-6). The scenes in that enigmatical Song of Songs are laid in these gardens, and amongst these pools of water. It is a lovely spot even now, and in Solomon's time, "in the day of the gladness of his heart," it must have been a paradise, filled "with pleasant fruits, camphire with spikenard, spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices; a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon" (Song of Solomon, iv. 13-15). In a field above the pools may still be seen the fountain, "the sealed fountain," which regulated and secured the constant supply of water for the Holy City. Tradition says that King Solomon shut up the springs, and kept the door of them sealed with his own signet.

Without entering into a minute account of the complicated system by which the water was supplied to Jerusalem, I will only say that a moderate sum would even now put the whole aqueduct in working order, so that it might do duty now as efficiently as it did then; that the water is as pure and clear and sparkling as any water I have ever seen, and that

when I visited the pools they were all full, which few travellers have lately seen.

It is amusing in this land to find how the different creeds of men crop up. There was a Baptist among our party, who held strong views about the future restoration of the land, and as he looked into these huge marble basins, with steps leading down to them, he said, "What magnificent baptistries! No doubt when the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion, this will be the place where, upon a profession of their faith, they will be immersed into His name!"

After exploring these marvellous tanks, and bringing away as a memorial a few maiden-hair ferns, which grow luxuriantly round the cracks in the aqueduct from which the water leaks, we returned to the camp to find our muleteers and attendants making merry and fraternising with the attendants of the neighbouring encampments. Not fewer than a hundred and fifty to two hundred of them were lying about, always in graceful attitudes and picturesque groups, some sitting round the fires, where the narghillis were in general use, some in little knots were singing in that

others lay at full length, and a background was made of standing figures. At a signal all broke into a song, if so a monotonous sound gurgling in the throat might be called, and this was accompanied by clapping the hands in measured time. Then there glided into the ring a youth about sixteen or seventeen years of age, Mahmoud by name, and with a voice as musical as any I ever heard in Palestine. He danced a slow and graceful dance to the song he was singing, and to which the "gurgling" of the bystanders made a rolling accompaniment. It was a love song, very simple in construction, very high-flown in sentiment, and the dance was a wooing dance to the ideal one of whom he sang. The steps were few, and the beauty of the dance consisted in the graceful swaying of the body, the gentle attitudinising of the arms, and the expressions on the face of the performer. It commenced with a slow and stately movement, and culminated in a passionate appeal, which stirred the audience into great enthusiasm. Mahmoud was succeeded by Ibrahim, a thick-set fellow, who owned many of the horses belonging to our party. His dance-song was descriptive of a journey through the land, followed by a descent of Bedouin on the unprotected horsemen, and a hand-to-hand fight. The chorus in this instance was a rapid clapping of hands with a strange grunt at measured intervals, not unlike that made by a pavier when bringing down his club heavily to the ground. The dance concluded with a round of applause very much unlike an English cheer,

but not a whit less hearty, and then Ibrahim had the right of call for the next performance. He threw down the gauntlet to the Europeans, who now thronged the ring, and as no one else would take it up, I ventured to do so. Divesting myself of coat and waistcoat, for the night was sultry, and instructing the band to clap rapidly and gurgle like a mill-stream, I gave them a hornpipe. It "brought down the house," as it were; the master of the ceremonies hugged me in a loving embrace, and the demand for an encore was so loud and continuous that I was constrained to accede, not, however, until many narghillis and tchibouks had been offered me to recruit exhausted nature. So I gave them the Highland fling, which astonished them not a little, for the Arabs do very little with their feet in dancing, leaving all the principal work for the arms and body; and when it was over, one of my tourist friends kindly came to the rescue and carried me off bodily, or I should have been overwhelmed in the ovation. I mention this, because this was my introduction to the Arabs, and it ingratiated me so much into the favour of these simple-minded folks that next morning when I emerged from my tent some came forward to kiss my hand and thank me for the entertainment. After that, every night while I was in Palestine, there was always a mat spread and a narghilli ready for me beside the camp fire whenever I would fraternise with them. This I frequently did, and shall report what progress I made with the natives as my narrative proceeds.

We were all astir by four o'clock next morning, for we were to make an excursion to Hebron and back, which would involve at least ten hours in the saddle, for the most part over break-neck roads. It was a lovely morning, and in health and spirits a moderate feeling of danger is a desirable thing. Sometimes our road led us over broad slippery stones by the side of precipices, where one false step might be fatal. But the Arab horses are more sure-footed than mules, and accidents rarely happen to parties journeying through the most rugged country. By far the greater number of accidents with these horses is upon good roads, to which they are so unaccustomed that they get careless and stumble, or flippant and run away. What adds to the marvel of their sure-footedness is that they are shod with plates completely over the foot, not an iron curve as with us.

On our road we passed strings of camels, sometimes as many as twenty or thirty in a line, and when these were met in portions of the road, which would only comfortably accommodate one horse at a time, it was rather a nervous piece of business. In one place we had the choice of wedging ourselves between the camels and the rocks, or of taking the outside berth, and with it the chance of a push over the precipice. We unanimously chose the former course. I admit I was not prepared to see camels go through the wonderful performances they do. In the desert, one looks out for camels as naturally as you do for sand, but to see them walking up rocky heights, passing

their broad feet over rugged stones, and "taking a hill" with the same easy tread and distressed look they have in the desert was more than I thought them capable of achieving. But I shall never understand camels. They always look unhappy, and seem as if they have something on their minds which they want to explain, and cannot. Sometimes they turn to you as if they were just about to reveal the secret, and then abruptly alter their determination. When their masters insist upon their kneeling for the purpose of loading or unloading, they meekly protest with an up-turned face and a heart-broken grunt. Their diet is as peculiar as their drinking habits. They eat anything and everything that comes in their way. On the road to Hebron, I watched a camel making a hearty meal of a decayed old tree. It was nothing more or less than "touch-wood," as school boys call it, and yet the poor beast seemed more than satisfied. Remarking on the habits and customs of camels to Frank, he read me an amusing account of them, given by an American traveller, which I will insert here.

"The road was filled with mule trains and long processions of camels. This reminds me that we have been trying for some time to think what a camel looks like, and now we have made it out. When he is down on all his knees, flat on his breast to receive his load, he looks something like a goose swimming; and when he is upright he looks like an ostrich with an extra set of legs. Camels are not beautiful, and their long under

They have immense flat, forked cushions of feet, that make a track in the dust like a pie with a slice cut out of it. They are not particular about their diet. They would eat a tombstone if they could bite it. A thistle grows about here which has needles on it that would pierce through leather, I think. The camels eat these. They show by their actions that they enjoy them. I suppose it would be a real treat for a camel to have a keg of nails for supper."

One thing that struck us as remarkable on the journey to Hebron was the total absence of any sign of dwelling-places. We passed a good deal of land under thorough cultivation, vineyards and fig gardens, and ploughed fields extending over a considerable space. We met several bodies of armed and very wild-looking Bedouins, and occasionally a few wayfarers, besides the merchantmen with their camel trains, but in all the distance from Solomon's pools to Hebron, from twelve to fourteen miles, two small convents were the only signs of habitations.

At length our course lay over a stony dangerous road, a long lane of slippery slabs, and here our thoughts were diverted from camels and Arabs, and the trifling things which even in the Holy Land engage one's thoughts. We were on the old road to Hebron—perhaps on the oldest road in the world. "Along it Abraham passed on that journey of faith to sacrifice his son on Moriah. Along it David led his veterans to conquer the stronghold of the Jebusites on Zion. And along it, perhaps, the Saviour was

borne in His mother's arms on the way to Egypt." A crowd of thoughts rushed through the mind as we looked around upon the scenes of fertility and desolation. We needed not to have the ruins of convent walls, or the legends of monks and book-makers to impress us with the wonders of the locality. These hills and roads and valleys are sacred to the memory of Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, and the Friend of God. Here, in the bitterness of his sorrow, after Sarai was "buried out of his sight," in the cave of Machpelah, no doubt he wandered, and, looking up at the bright stars in the cloudless sky which had been typical to him aforetime of the power and goodness of God in the days of his prosperity, he looked again through his tearful eyes and read in them a pledge still of the goodness and faithfulness of the Almighty.

Here Isaac, and Jacob, and David, and Solomon walked, revolving in their minds the destiny of that nation which might have been at this day the centre of universal empire; but the scattered tribes are spread through the nations of the world, and for the present take least root in their own native soil.

It was thought expedient by our dragomans that as we were so formidable a party, we should not ride into the town *en masse*, as the minds of the natives were in a somewhat disturbed state with regard to Christian visitors; moreover, we had travelled long and were hungry, and, prosaic as it may seem, we were calm enough to satisfy the cravings of the inner

man before exploring one of the most interesting sites in Palestine, although it lay stretched at our feet. We spread our mats in a grove of trees not far from the Quarantine building, and while we were at luncheon we were visited by Jews who came to bring us wine made from the grapes of Eshcol — pale, sickly looking creatures were these Jews, each with two long ringlets, one on either side of the face, and long light coloured coats reaching to the feet. One of them spoke enough English to tell us that the wine came from the very place where the spies took the cluster of grapes which required two men to carry. All around us there were vineyards and terraces for vines, and, although it was too early in the season for us to judge of the fruit, we were told that this is still the best place in Palestine for grapes, that the best are made into raisins, and with the rest a thick kind of syrup is made; the latter is esteemed a delicacy among the natives, when eaten with bread. To give my candid opinion about the wine of Eshcol, interesting as it was to drink it in that place, sold, too, by an Israelite, with the true national instinct of making all he could by the transaction, it was nevertheless remarkably poor stuff, and were I to settle in Hebron I should feel it to be ridiculous to join any Band of Hope to keep me from indulging in it too freely.

From the place of our bivouac we had a fine view of the city and the valley of Eshcol, and, as after luncheon there was as usual a long pause for relaxation and digestful rest, we had time to think about

the wonderful history of the city we were about to

• • • • •

under those trees yonder in the valley, and we wonder what marvel of form that was with which he was so familiar when the Divine Being came to speak with him as with a friend. We picture, too, with vivid distinctness, one scene which we had located in our mind's eye from infancy. There goes forth from that valley a lad with the light of God's countenance shining in his face. He is about his father's business, and is on his way to Shechem to seek his brethren. Later on we see an old man wandering about with his head bent low in a great sorrow, for Jacob has seen the blood-stained garment of his beloved son. "And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days." (Gen. xxxvii. 34).

We will not dwell upon the scenes of slaughter when "Joshua and all Israel went up and smote Hebron with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and all the souls that were therein." (Josh. x. 37). Nor upon the second conquest, when, in answer to Caleb's prayer, "Hebron became his inheritance" (Josh. xiv. 13), and, in conjunction with the children of Judah, he finally conquered the giants. Nor will we conjure up the scenes which happened there when it was a City of Refuge, and the residence of the priests, into which the hotly pursued manslayer might flee. (Josh. xx).

But we must not turn away from it until we have seen it under one other set of associations. Here David dwelt for seven years and a half when he reigned over Judah alone. (2 Sam. ii. 1). Here

Absalom was born; here Abner was treacherously murdered by Joab, "who took him aside to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib that he died." (2 Sam. iii. 27). From where we are sitting we look down upon a cemetery. How easy and natural to locate there the scene described in these words: "They buried Abner in Hebron, and King David himself followed the bier, and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept," for a prince and a great man had fallen that day in Israel. (2 Sam. iii. 17-39). Sad as it is to lose a friend by death, it is sadder far to lose the affection of a living son. It was to this city, under the pretext of performing a vow, that the rebellious Absalom came. And he "sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron." (2 Sam. xv. 10).

But our dragomans have sounded their whistles to announce that it is time to start on our exploration of the town and neighbourhood.

Just before entering the town, we came to a large pool about 130 feet square, which, with another further north, supplies the town with water. Both the reservoirs are very ancient, and to this one there is a story attached. Rechab and Baanah, sons of Rimmon, thought to do King David a service by slaying Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, and therefore a rival. They cruelly murdered him in his bed, and brought the head unto David in Hebron. But David, with that

manly sense of honour and true nobility which distinguished his early life, was wroth with them, and swore with a solemn oath that he would not spare the lives of these murderers. "And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron." (2 Sam. iv. 12).

Around this pool we saw men standing with curious hand-barrows, apparently waiting for hire. The barrows turned out to be biers, the first and only vehicles for funerals we saw in Palestine.

Hebron is now a city without walls, but there are gates to some of the principal streets, which seem almost superfluous. The streets are dark and dirty; the houses are for the most part built of stone, and many have a double storey, and are crowned with cupolas which always give a curious effect to a town. In passing through one street, arched and consequently dark, we came to one or two schools which were held in underground rooms, and consequently darker. We paused to visit one, but the white robed and turbaned tutor, who was teaching a motley and rather noisy little assembly, scowled at us so forbiddingly that our intentions were frustrated. It was pleasant to see such a crowd of little ones being taught to read, and to watch them swaying over their lessons—for the Arab children seem to rock perpetually while they are learning,—but it was painful to think that close by the resting place of Abraham, the Friend of God, whom they delight to

honour, there is such gross darkness, and superstition, and crime. He, in those far-off days, "saw Christ's day and was glad," but those upon whom the ends of the world have come still sit in darkness and the shadow of death.

There are no Christians in Hebron. Jews abound, —a sickly, emaciated set of men, not half so much like the typical Jew as the "old clo's" men in Hounds-

the impressiveness is to be obtained by dismissing the surroundings and recalling the Scripture stories connected with the site.

No words of mine can add force to the simple beauty of that story in Genesis, so true in all its details to Eastern life of to-day, wherein we read how "Sarah died in Kirjath-Arba, the same is Hebron ; and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her." How, stifling the bitter sorrow in his heart, he rose up and entered into a contract with the sons of Heth. Never was there a picture drawn with more photographic distinctness ; the dignified bearing of this mighty prince ; his calm and business-like manner of entering into all the details of the contract ; his courteous and gentlemanly behaviour, and the round-about manœuvring of the sons of Heth ; the interested idlers at the gate of the city,—every touch of the inspired pen is true to the life, and, strange to say, of the life and habits of the Orientals of to-day.*

"And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the Cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre ; and the field and the cave that is therein were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the sons of Heth" (Gen. xxiii.)

Mighty prince as Abraham was, "very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold," founder of that great nation which was to possess the land for ever, this was the only spot in all Palestine that was his own, and for

* For an excellent account of Oriental contracts see "The Land and the Book."

this he "weighed out the silver unto Ephron" (see

what I was not permitted to see. Dean Stanley has entered the sacred enclosure, and has told some of the wonderful secrets which have been locked therein for ages. To those who are not familiar with his work, the following extracts will be interesting.

After describing the difficulties in obtaining permission to enter, and the military occupation of the town necessary to secure their safety from the fanaticism of the people, the Dean proceeds to describe the different tombs, premising that these tombs, like all those in Mussulman mosques, do not profess to be the actual places of sepulture. The shrines were in small chapels, guarded, some by gates of silver and some by gates of brass. And then occurs this interesting passage :—

“We have now gone through all the shrines, whether of real or fictitious importance, which the sanctuary includes. It will be seen that up to this point no mention has been made of the subject of the greatest interest, namely, the sacred cave itself, in which one at least of the patriarchal family may possibly still repose intact—the embalmed body of Jacob. It may be well supposed that to this object our inquiries were throughout directed. One indication alone of the cavern beneath was visible. In the interior of the mosque, at the corner of the shrine of Abraham, was a small circular hole, about eight inches across, of which one foot above the pavement was built on strong masonry, but of which the lower part, as far as we could see and feel, was of the living rock.

This cavity appeared to open into a dark space beneath, and that space (which the guardians of the mosque believed to extend under the whole platform) can hardly be anything else than the ancient cavern of Machpelah. This was the only aperture which the guardians recognised. Once, they said, 2,500 years ago, a servant of a great king had penetrated through some other entrance. He descended in full possession of his faculties, and of remarkable corpulence; he returned blind, deaf, withered, and crippled. Since then the entrance was closed, and this aperture alone was left, partly for the sake of allowing the holy air of the cave to escape into the mosque and be scented by the faithful, partly for the sake of allowing a lamp to be let down by a chain which we saw suspended at the mouth, to burn upon the sacred grave. We asked whether it could not be lighted now? 'No,' they said; 'the saint likes to have a lamp at night, but not in the full daylight.'

"With that glimpse into the dark void, we and the world without must for the present be satisfied. Whether any other entrance is known to the Mussulmans themselves must be a matter of doubt. The original entrance to the cave, if it is now to be found at all, must probably be on the southern face of the hill, between the mosque and the gallery containing the shrine of Joseph, and entirely obstructed by the ancient Jewish wall, probably built across it for this very purpose."

It was bitterly disappointing and mortifying to

stand near the entrance of the mosque, and see ragged boys and girls, and repulsive old men and women, walk in and out, none daring to make them afraid, while we had to stand without, but feeling that we would give to the half of our kingdom, as it were, to be allowed to enter. But we tried to be thankful for all small mercies, and were allowed to enter a gateway on one side of the building, where there is a hole in the wall, into which we were at liberty to thrust our hands. The satisfaction arising from this is to feel that you have touched the sacred place, and have caught just a glimpse of the natural rock of the cave, but it is a poor satisfaction. Devout Jews come here and kiss the stones as they do at the wailing-place in Jerusalem, and when they put their hands into this hole they oftentimes drop in a written supplication to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, for intercession on behalf of the scattered nation.

We were taken also up a steep path, past a dead camel, which stank horribly, but seemed not to offend the Arab nose, to a place where we could get on to the top of the mosque, from whence we obtained a much clearer and better view of the shape and extent of the building. We strained our eyes in striving to see into the mosque through the skylights, but we were unable to attain to a glimpse that could yield a particle of satisfaction.

The only things we really cared to see in Hebron were denied us, while the curiosities we did not care to see abounded. Information as to the interior of

the mosque is hard to obtain, while information about the worthless curiosities is profuse. Here are some of the sights and sites of Hebron :—

The tomb of Abner.

The tomb of Jesse the father of David.

The resting-place of Ish-bosheth's head.

The red earth from which Adam and Eve were created.

The burial-place of Adam and Eve.

The exact spot where Cain slew Abel, &c., &c., &c.

Leaving Hebron, we mounted again, and rode over a rough bit of road, but in the midst of well-cultivated fields, for about a couple of hours, and then entered a gateway, passed through vineyards for a short distance, and then came to a halt beside a well, and under the spreading branches of a mammoth tree, the finest we saw in Palestine. Here is holy ground indeed, if tradition be true, which marks this tree as Abraham's oak, and this locality as Mamre, where Abram sat at his tent door in the heat of the day, and "he lift up his eyes, and looked, and lo! three men stood by him," one of them being none other than the Second Person in the glorious Trinity. I need not say that the controversialists began to argue upon the truth of the tradition, the identity of the species of the tree, and other matters which the learned have bothered themselves about, and will bother as long as the tree stands.

We were quite willing to go in with those who

agreed that it was *perhaps* on this site that the tree stood which was there in our Saviour's time, and was believed by devout Jews to be as old as the world, and which they identified as the oak of Abraham. The tree there now is a magnificent one, and measures twenty-three feet in girth. It cannot possibly be the identical tree under which Abraham sat, but it may be its lawful descendant.

I will not harrow up anybody's feelings with a detail of the return journey to Solomon's Pools. Judas Maccabeus was in his tantrums, and when I got down at my tent-door that night, long after all the rest of the party, I walked as one who had been broken on the wheel, or had gone through the earlier stages of the rack.





V.—BETHLEHEM—MAR SABA.

especially that portion which is under careful cultivation by converted Jews who have settled here. The aqueduct is in good preservation all the way to Bethlehem, and we followed the course of it for a considerable distance, remarking, as none could help doing, that the works performed in those good old times were very different from those of our day, and were intended not for ornament only ; nor could we fail to notice the clusters of flowers which grew in magnificent profusion wherever there had been a leakage from the aqueduct.

After leaving Urtas, we began to look out for fresh sights, and nowhere in Palestine need you travel for half an hour without coming upon some place with a history. There, for instance, is a hill over yonder with a broad top to it. We have not time to visit it, but we are told that there are ruins of houses, large bevelled stones, and broken columns to be seen there. Now it is desolate, except for the occasional visits of Bedouin, who pitch their tents around it while they pasture their flocks and herds ; but once it smiled in beauty, as other desolate places in the land did, when Amos, the herdman of Tekoa, and gatherer of sycamore fruit, heard the word of the Lord, and, although not a divinity student ("I was not a prophet, neither was I a prophet's son," he says—Amos vii. 14,) was called to the prophetic office. From somewhere about this part came "the wise woman of Tekoa," at Joab's request, whose message to King David induced him to send for Absalom from banishment (2 Sam. xiv. 2).

But more interesting than any other association is that which assigns to this neighbourhood the Cave of Adullam. It was among these rocks and cliffs and barren gorges that "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, came and gathered themselves to King David, and he became a captain over them, and there were with him about 400 men." (1 Sam. xxii. 2.)

Perhaps there are few incidents in the life of David more romantic than those which occurred in this place; and there is surely no incident in the history of his life at this time more tenderly beautiful than that which is told of how he went from his hiding-place to plead with the King of Moab for protection for his parents. Danger threatened him,—there were crowding circumstances around him to engage his attention, but neither danger nor claims of any kind could interfere with his first duty of caring for the safety and welfare of his parents. He took them from the cave, brought them through these winding glens at our feet, so well known to him; crossed the Jordan with them, and confided them to the care of the king, and "they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the hold." (1 Sam. xxii. 3, 4.)

We did not visit the cave, which is somewhat difficult of access, but Dr Thomson and other travellers say that there is no good reason to doubt that this was the cave, and that it fulfils all the requirements of the story.

On our right, as we continue our journey, we have a strange mountain, or rather hill, rising from a ridge to a height of about 400 or 500 feet, in the shape of a cone, and as smooth and even as if it had been turned out of a mould. It is called the Frank Mountain, and Dr Robinson considers it to be "the site of the fortress and city of *Herodium*, erected by Herod the Great. According to Josephus that place was situated about sixty stadia from Jerusalem, and not far from Tekoa. Here, on a hill of moderate height, resembling the form of a female breast, and which he raised still higher, or at least fashioned by artificial means, Herod erected a fortress, having in it royal apartments of great strength and splendour. At the foot of the mountain he built other palaces for himself and his friends, and caused water to be brought thither from a distance. The whole plain or plateau around was also covered with buildings, forming a large city, of which the hill and fortress constituted the acropolis."

If this be *Herodium* it is the place where Herod was buried. Well for it that it lies in ruin, for it is the burial-place of a tyrant. The story is often told of his last illness, and of his death at Jericho. The cries of the slaughtered children were rung out while he lay hopelessly sick; and just in the last moments he gave orders for all the nobles who had attended him, to be murdered, "that so at least his death might be attended with universal mourning."

As we neared the town of Bethlehem, it looked the

perfection of beauty, for distance lends enchantment to a view nowhere more than in the Holy Land. As I have said, none need be told "That is Bethlehem." If I had come upon it suddenly and alone, I should have had no hesitation about it. Who has not pictured it in his mind's eye over and over again, and especially at the Christmas season, when everybody seems to take a more vividly personal interest in the Gospel story? Who, as he has read the prophecy, "Unto *us* a child is born," has not, as he has laid emphasis on the pronoun, also drawn a picture in his mind's eye of the surroundings of that sacred place, where the Saviour of the world was cradled? I have for one, many a time; and strange to say, the "clairvoyance of the imagination," as Sir E. B. Lytton calls it, was true. Bethlehem was *my* Bethlehem. There it was on yonder hill, with terrace upon terrace, on which the vine and the fig-tree flourish,—leading up to it, and around, were the corn-fields and the green pastures. Probably it looks to-day very much as it did in the days of old; it never could have been much larger than it is now, for the hill on which it stands is covered with buildings; its buildings are poor and shabby when you are close to them, but at a distance the mass of square-built houses, and the free distribution of domes, has rather an imposing effect for these parts; the vegetation is the same, although there is not so much of it; and the calm and the quiet, the bright gorgeous sunlight, and the deep blue of the sky, these are just the same; and the sun seems to

look down upon us to-day with a brighter effulgence and a more excellent glory, for, try to be prosaic as hard as we will, everything gets transfigured when we approach for the first time the very place where the Lord and Saviour of mankind once dwelt.

We paused as we stood on a hill-side, separated from Bethlehem by a deep and beautiful valley, sacred with holy associations, and this is the best place to pause and talk for a few minutes over the history of our Lord's birth-place.

The first mention of Bethlehem is in connection with the story of Rachel's death, to which we have already referred. It was then called Ephratah, and afterwards Bethlehem-Ephratah. Micah's well-known prophecy is very explicit, "Thou, Bethlehem-Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel." (Micah v. 2.) It would have been very satisfactory to modern travellers if all places in Scripture had been as explicitly described. What rivers of ink and miles of paper it would have saved, not to mention the weariness of flesh, to the disputants upon doubtful sites! There was a Bethlehem in the tribe of Zebulun, but there is no chance of confounding the two; in fact, the two have never been confounded; the Bethlehem in which Christ was born is in the district of Ephratah in the tribe of Judah, and there has been no more occasion for controversy with regard to Bethlehem than there has been as to the site of Jerusalem.

There are so many events connected with Bethlehem that it is hard to single out cases. But one cannot look upon that group of women, in their white robes, standing over there on a terrace just under the town, as it appears from our view, gesticulating to one another in earnest conversation, without thinking of the group that once surrounded Naomi, the sorrow-stricken widow, returning to her native town, and hearing the people say, as they looked at her pale and haggard face, "Is this Naomi?" Nor can we look upon those corn-fields, with their green blades waving in the morning air, without thinking of the time of harvest, when Ruth gleaned in the field after the reapers, and Boaz saw her, and loved her for her love, so that by-and-by she became his wife; and when a child was born to her in process of time, she became the grandmother of David the King, and the ancestress of Christ. It is a charming story, and I know not that I ever read a romance with a title of the interest that I read the story of Ruth that morning on the way to Bethlehem.

But see! over there, coming down the steep pathway on one side of the town, is a shepherd leading forth his sheep. He goeth before them, and the sheep follow him. He is leading them out to green pastures; they know him, and follow whithersoever he leadeth; the foremost of them are not more than a foot behind the shepherd's heels. It was upon one of these hills that David, "the ruddy youth, and withal of a beautiful countenance and goodly to look to," kept his

father's sheep. It was in these glens and valleys that he rang out those glorious songs which have echoed through the world, and been the key notes to new melodies in every believer's heart. It was here that the rocks and the hills, the sunshine and the shadow, the poetry and music of the little world around him, became God's instruments to create that mighty world within whose treasures have enriched all the ages. It was from those terraces yonder that he would see the starry heavens declaring the glory of God, and cry out in humility and faith, "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" Truly Bethlehem is still the "city of David" (Luke ii. 4), and every hill, and valley, and field recalls some story of his life. Now we see him coming from that wild glen bearing the trophies of his battles with the lion and the bear; or we see him hurrying with eager haste and wondering countenance to meet the prophet who had sent for him from the fields, and who anointed him in the midst of his brethren. Again we notice him coming down that steep hill with the ass laden by his father, on his way to Saul; and we note the tender care with which he holds the harp, that friend of his solitude and minister of his joy,—that instrument which shall be in his hand as powerful over the giant Saul as the sling and the stone, his boyhood's toys, shall be over the giant Goliath.

But our dragoman, who is thinking more about getting through the day's programme, and of spreading luncheon in the Shepherd's Field punctually at

two o'clock, than he is of Ruth or David, sounds his whistle to signify that it is time to move on.

The approach to Bethlehem is so steep that we have to cling on to the horses' manes to prevent sliding off the saddle; and then, as we enter the gate, we pass through narrow streets as steep as a staircase, and so slippery with smooth stones that we fairly slide into the town.

We pulled up in the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity, and were immediately surrounded with a crowd of men and boys eager to hold our horses. Such a motley collection! and such costuming, representing every shade of every colour of the rainbow. What a pity it is that we civilised Europeans wear such ugly clothes and are so painfully destitute of taste. The colour and variety of the costumes in that crowd were as great as would only be seen in any great European pageant; there were women in snow-white robes from head to foot, others in bright yellow, and others in a mixture of all colours; there were men in the flowing *abbas*, or the light-blue calico tunic, or the "coat of many colours," and their heads were decorated with turbans of red and of white, or the simple red fez. The children were, some of them, simply "girded with a linen ephod," while others were dressed in nature's own costume, supplemented by a pinafore! But it matters not what these Eastern people wear; if it be but an old and worn-out shawl, they will twist it into such graceful folds, and wear it with such a delightful ease, that a West End lady

would give a ransom to acquire the art. I remember at one of our camping places throwing away some paper collars that had got slightly crushed, and an Arab girl coming past pounced upon them and carried them off. A few minutes afterwards I saw her with one of those collars converted into a head-dress. It stood on her brow, and the ends which I should have worn turned down she had turned up, and over them had thrown the rich clusters of her black hair, through which peeped a bunch of crimson flowers fresh gathered from the wayside, and it was a head-dress which no Bond Street barber, with all his "latest arrivals from Paris," could have improved upon.

I confided Judas Maccabeus to the care of a regular little David for beautiful countenance, and then, through the low doorway, entered the Church of the Nativity.

It is a magnificent building, and "the oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world." The inveterate Empress Helena built it in the year A.D. 327. The Basilica is imposing with its rows of marble columns, some of them taken, it is said, from the Temple at Jerusalem. On the walls there are traces of the old mosaics, and here and there are patches still in a good state of preservation. The huge beams supporting the roof and ceiling are of cedar from Lebanon. This Basilica is the common property of all Christians, and leads into the three huge convents belonging to the Greeks, the Latins, and the Armenians. But I confess it was painful to me to cause

even for a moment on the threshold of the one great attraction in all this monster pile of buildings. My suspense, however, was not of long duration, for some priests came forward with their hands full of candles, and lighting one each, amid a great deal of grease dropping, and unpleasant effluvia of bad tallow, and unruly wicks that would smoke and not burn, we descended a flight of stone steps hewn out of the rock, and entered the Chapel of the Nativity. It is only 33 feet long by 11 broad, and is really a rocky cave. The first idea on entering might reasonably be that you had stumbled accidentally into the "property room" of a theatre. Bits of lace and embroidery hang about the rocky walls—candles are burning everywhere—silver lamps are hung about indiscriminately—little tables, with all sorts of religious gim-cracks upon them, are stuck here and there, with small pictures of brazen saints over them. At least this was the sort of general idea I received, until, in rather a loud voice, which did not become the place, one of the priests began to point out the curiosities, but was stopped by our dragoman, who claimed that privilege for himself. At the east end of the Chapel is a small apse; and on the pavement is a silver star, around which is this inscription:—

HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST.

Sixteen heavy silver lamps hang around the spot, and are kept constantly burning. A few paces off is another recess, called the Grotto of the Manger, where

the young child was laid. It is almost as gorgeous, and therefore almost as distressing to behold.

And this is the birthplace of Christ? The place where He who "became poor for our sakes" lay?

It was a disappointment to me. I wanted to feel nothing but a thrill of unmingled joy as I stood beside that holy place, but my Protestantism got the better of me, and made me feel angry and vexed at the millinery, and jewellery, and tawdry finery displayed with such wretched taste all about the place. I wished at the time that St Helena had never lived, and that the monks had never set foot in Palestine, for then there might have been a chance of finding the birthplace of Christ somewhere where the glad light of heaven could have penetrated into it, instead of finding it in a hole in a dark cave.

After a time, however, those strong feelings gave way to milder ones, and I tried to see through the trappings and tinsel to the great and solemn fact which the place commemorates.

But is this really the place where Christ was born? This is a question I will not attempt to answer. If it was not in this actual spot it must have been close by, and I do not see any good reason for doubting that this is the true site. Some writers have taken great pains to prove that not only is this the exact spot, but that this spot was once the habitation of Chimham, subsequently the house of Boaz and Ruth, of Jesse and David, and consequently the old family property of Mary and Joseph's ancestors. It is an

Land. Here, for more than thirty years, beside what he believed to be literally the cradle of the Christian faith, Jerome fasted, prayed, dreamed, and studied; here he gathered round him his devoted followers in the small communities which formed the beginnings of conventual life in Palestine; here the fiery spirit which he had brought with him from his Dalmatian birthplace, and which had been first roused to religious fervour on the banks of the Moselle, vented itself in the flood of treatises, letters, commentaries, which he poured forth from his retirement, to terrify, exasperate, and enlighten the Western world; here, also, was composed the famous translation of the Scriptures which is still the "*Biblia Vulgata*" of the Latin Church; and here took place that pathetic scene, his last communion and death—at which all the world has been permitted to be present in the wonderful picture of Domenichino, which has represented, in colours never to be surpassed, the attenuated frame of the weak and sinking flesh, the resignation and devotion of the spirit ready for its immediate departure."

It was a great relief on that hot day to blow out our candles and leave the oppressively warm cells and come out into the open air and the glorious sunshine. Edwin, Frank, and I made ourselves into a separate party to go exploring, and I think we went through every street and alley in Bethlehem. It is a quaint and curious town, many of the houses are little better than pig-styes, but some have an air of comfort rarely

to be met with in the East. It helped us to believe in the Church of the Nativity as the "Inn" of St Luke's gospel, when we went into a house where the principal room was as much a cave as the grotto of the Nativity, and where a recess in the wall, used by the "lady of the house" as a repository for Sunday-going clothes, answered exactly to the recess in the rock where it was said our Lord was born. In several other places in Palestine I noticed similar dwellings, the house being built around a cave or large indenture in the rock, by which means sometimes two side walls and part of the roof would be gained.

Everybody has heard of the beauty of the inhabitants of Bethlehem, but nobody has heard enough. We went into one house to make a few purchases of needlework, and the family group to which we were introduced was such that, had I been a painter, I would have given a good round sum for the privilege of a "sitting." There was the father of the family, a white-haired man with a noble brow and a face which had "purity" written upon it. A school boy would have identified him with the "Old Father William" of Southey's poem. His dress was of no particular order or style, but seemed to consist of a variety of garments of all kinds thrown about him, and each had fallen in folds and arrangement, which expressed simple dignity. The "gude-wife" had not worn so well as her spouse, but she was a comfortable, motherly looking woman (Frank called her Rachel) with elaborate head-gear, a closely fitting embroidered

jacket, and a kirtle which might have contended with the rainbow for variety and beauty of colour. But the two daughters! graceful girls of fourteen and sixteen, they were the perfection of beauty. I will not attempt a description, but content myself with giving an extract from Edwin's note-book relating to this subject :—

"The girls of Bethlehem are charming. Such lovely eyes, dark and lustrous; such black glossy hair, rich and wavy; such teeth of pearly whiteness, such rounded limbs, and every movement full of grace. How I wished that I could have spoken to them in their native tongue. As it was, I could only tell them what I had to say in a language they could not understand, but they seemed to be interested, notwithstanding, and showed us the curiosities of their house and their clever needlework with a frankness and a modesty which an English lady might have envied. *N.B.*—I thought I never should have got Frank out of the house."

We strolled along all the principal thoroughfares, and side streets which were not thoroughfares and ended in nowhere; sometimes we entered the manufactories, where we were invariably received with kindness and courtesy, many of the men taking pains to explain to us some of the processes of their work. They carry on a very considerable trade in Bethlehem in little curiosities made from mother-of-pearl and from olive and Dead Sea wood. Beads, bracelets, rosaries, crucifixes, paper weights, cigar holders, and every

variety of nic-nac are offered for sale. In the courtyard of the Church of the Nativity there is quite a fancy bazaar of stalls, and every pilgrim and traveller goes away tolerably laden, for although the prices they ask at the first are exorbitant, after a little debate they will come down to half or even a third of the sum originally demanded, and the articles are then obtained at a really very moderate charge. This unfortunate custom of asking double the amount the vendor is prepared to take, prevails all over the East, and is a great nuisance, demanding a large stock of time and patience.

One man tempted us to enter a little restaurant and take some of the wine of Bethlehem. Vinegar and treacle would make quite as pleasant a beverage.

We did not visit the Well of Bethlehem, where the mighty men of David, breaking through the camp of the Philistines, hazarded their lives to gratify the wish that he had expressed, "Oh that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is at the gate." (1 Chron. xi. 15-19). Nor did we enter the Milk Grotto, where tradition says the Virgin and Child were hidden before they took their flight into Egypt. The fact was, we were anxious to get to our mid-day destination, the Shepherd's Field. The air and exercise of Palestine gave us such rare appetites, and all of us being in the enjoyment of robust health, we often were crying out for luncheon, like hungry school boys, an hour before it was ready.

Gladly, therefore, we entered the Shepherd's Field.

A part of the plain is inclosed with a wall (soulless wretches who built it !) ; there are some fine old olives in and around it, and under their grateful shade we found our carpets spread.

After luncheon, I took up a position apart, and lay on my back looking up into the clear blue sky, where once the multitude of the heavenly host made glorious harmony, and across to that quaint and picturesque town, pleasant from any point of view, where the Young Child was born. It was with a new interest I read again that sweet story of old, which has always been the passage of Holy Writ, most read and sung on the Christmas Eve in our fatherland, but never when the Christmas bells have been ringing and the thought that thousands were reading it and thanking God, did it come with a force equal to that of being in the midst of the very scene. Here is the story:—

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo ! the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you ; ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ‘Glory to God

in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.' And it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them into heaven the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph—and the babe lying in a manger."

Only a babe! I have refrained from going off from my narrative to dovetail into it fag-ends of sermons, but there is a lesson to be learnt at Bethlehem so full of loving import that I cannot but refer to it. Let me do so in a brief extract from a work of fiction.

"There is one thing," said Wynn timer, "that I have often thought about. Why was it necessary for Jesus to come as a baby? He could not do anything for so long?"

"First, I would answer Wynn timer that if you would tell me why it is necessary for all of us to come as babies, it would be less necessary for me to tell you why He came so—whatever was human must be His. But I would say next, are you sure that He could not do anything for so long? Does a baby do nothing? Ask mamma there. Is it for nothing that the mother lifts up such heartfelt thanks to God for the baby on her knee? Is it nothing that the baby opens such fountains of love in almost every heart? Ah! you do not think how much every baby has to do with the saving of the world. The saving it from selfish-

ness, folly, and greed. And for Jesus, was He not going to establish the reign of love in the earth? How could He do it better than begin from babyhood? He had to lay hold of the heart of the world, how could He do it better than begin with His mother's, the best one in it? Through His mother's love first He grew into the world. It was first by the door of all the holy relations of the family that He entered the human world, laying hold of mother, father, brothers, sisters, all his friends."*

As I lay in the shepherds' field I could see, in an opposite direction from Bethlehem, and at some distance off, a man ploughing. He seemed heavily laden, and on putting up my field-glass I could discover that he had a large club hanging at his side, while in his belt he carried pistols and other formidable weapons. On enquiring, I was told that the neighbourhood was so infested with robbers, and so liable to the incursions of the Bedouin, that much of the land, even at a short distance from the town, is allowed to lie waste, as the inhabitants would never be able to gather in the fruits; and even close to the city, it is a necessity to be thus armed for fear of attack. A strange anomaly! Trying to catch the echoes of the song "peace on earth, good will toward men," and watching that armed ploughman!

* The Sea-Board Parish. By Geo. Macdonald, LL.D.

In the innocence of my heart I had been fondly imagining that I was perhaps on the very spot where the shepherds were watching their flocks that Christmas night, but, if the Greeks are right, I was wrong, for after a while I went to what at first sight looked like a mere heap of stones, but finding some steps leading down somewhere, I descended, and found myself in a cave or grotto, so dark that I could not, until I had been in it for some minutes, discern any object, and then by degrees I discovered that it was fitted up with the usual decorations of a Greek church, and here, says tradition, the shepherds were abiding.

Half an hour from Bethlehem (we left it very reluctantly, for it is a place where one fain would linger), we began to lose sight altogether of the pleasant fields and groves and vine terraces, and by-and-by came into desolate regions with bare barren hills and gloomy ravines. There were places where you might commit suicide in a moment by just wheeling your horse round, and everybody would be sure to say it was an unavoidable accident. One place especially was very tempting in this respect. I suppose everybody, at some time or other, when passing along a very dangerous height without anything to lay hold to, has experienced an almost irresistible temptation to throw himself down headlong. I once heard it suggested that this was the devil's temptation to our Lord when he took him to the pinnacle of the temple and bade him cast himself down. I kept my eyes fixed steadfastly on my horse's head, or the dead wall of

rock at my right hand, rather than look down that awful precipice on my left. I have seen places that are *really* worse over and over again, but never travelled on any road, and certainly never on horseback, that *seemed* worse than the one part of this road of which I speak. It was a brilliantly bright day, and the naked limestone hills blazed with light. Not a blade, or vestige of a blade, of vegetation was to be seen far as the eye could reach. The heat was intense, and although I believe the actual distance was not great, that pathway on the edge of the precipice seemed interminable. We went over worse places than these later on in our journey, but use soon becomes second nature, and nothing in my travels in Palestine impressed me individually with a greater sense of danger than the ride from Bethlehem to the gorge of the Kedron.

At length, in the midst of wild and grand scenery, we came to the celebrated convent of Mar Saba. Without doubt it is one of the most extraordinary buildings in Syria, of immense strength and great size, built partly by art and partly by nature, and very perplexing to the beholder to tell which is the one and which the other. It stands on the side of a ravine, at the base of which is the Kedron, and around are battlemented walls. We pulled up at the principal gateway, and were admitted forthwith. In most cases, however, an introduction is requisite, and when the traveller knocks at the door, a basket is let down from a loop-hole high up in the great blank

wall, where a monk keeps guard, and after the letter has been carefully scrutinised, the door is opened and the traveller admitted.

Having entered, we found ourselves in one of the strangest places that human ingenuity ever contrived for a dwelling-place. It is a series of precipices, with walls of natural rock and artificial battlements; you look down at buildings, and courtyards, and labyrinths of passages, and up at curious holes in the walls with ledges in front, which are the cells and dwelling-places of monks. The place is full of mystery; you see men walking upon ledges of rock and turning into holes in the walls; now you look upon a little garden hanging in the air, as it seems, with a solitary palm tree looking wonderingly down into the chasm, in which are more buildings, and chapels, and cupolas. None but the initiated could ever find their way through those mysterious labyrinths, and once within those strong walls, woe to him who would try to get out! It made me feel qualmish to think of the consequences of such an attempt, when looking through a loop-hole I gazed down into that awful ravine of the Kedron.

How ever came the place to be built? Well, in days of yore, when men were more of opinion than they are now, that God is pleased with their retirement into desert places for the purification of their souls and the banishment of all worldly associations, this spot was selected on account of its utter desolation as a good place for undisturbed meditation, prayer,

and fasting—especially the latter, I should think—and these poor deluded fanatics or monomaniacs came out into this place of horror, and dwelt in holes and caves of the rock. In the year 483 A.D., or thereabouts, Sabas—a saint no doubt—came from Cappadocia and pitched his tent, or rather scooped out a hole in this place. He was a man much sought after, seeing that tradition affirms no fewer than 14,000 or 15,000 men as mad, or rather as religious, as himself came here and scooped out holes around his. St Saba became their leader, he worked miracles among them, his name and fame travelled far and wide, and he became the founder of the convent. Let us hope he was more comfortable in his apartments towards the latter end of his life than he was at his introduction to this retired neighbourhood, for we went into the cave where he spent many devotional years at the first. It would have required more piety than I possessed to have put up there for a night. It is said that when he first entered the cave he found it was inhabited by a lion, but, nothing daunted, Sabas gave him a verbal notice to quit, upon which the lion acted without ever thinking of taking the law into his own paws. So great was the piety of Sabas.

The subsequent history of the convent we will not stay to tell, but it is interesting to know that while it is the richest convent in Palestine, and stands in the finest situation in the world for attack, assistance for the besieged being nowhere obtainable, so strong is its position that it has resisted every attempt

from the wandering Bedouin who prowl around its walls.

Of course we saw all the curiosities of the place, such as the cells where remarkable monks have dwelt ; a horrible charnel-house, in which are cart-loads of saintly skulls and bones ; the tomb of St Saba ; and a fine church, in which were a few rarities in the shape of gilded pictures and, if I remember rightly, tapestries, but I confess to the triviality of my observations when I say that an old clock arrested my attention more than anything else, for it had written on its face "George Clark, maker, Leadenhall Street, London." I would give a trifle to know the history of that clock, and to trace its adventures from the time it left the busy crowds of London until it took up its abode for ever in the ravine of Kedron.

It was a source of great vexation to the ladies of our party to be obliged to remain outside the convent until our explorations were over, for these unnatural monks glory in the fact that never, under any circumstances whatever, even of distress or danger, have they permitted any member of the gentle sex to enter within their walls. God help them, poor fellows ! They make a grand mistake about this world ; I hope they are not making a mistake about the world to come. They have never grasped the true idea of the life that now is ; they know nothing of the sweetness and tenderness and true beauty of this world, and yet they need it as much as other men. I could have wept for that little group of

monks fondling and nestling in their hands some of the gay yellow-winged birds which are peculiar to this place, and seem their sole remaining joy. It would have been a good work to have persuaded them, had it been possible, that there was a nobler, grander work for them to do, and lawful delights for them to enjoy, which would make this world a worthy introduction to the next. And a good text on which to found the appeal would have been, "Let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; whether the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

We camped that night in the valley of Kedron, and the wind seemed to bear upon it sighs from Mar Saba. This was but a foolish fancy, while the yelping of wolves and jackals was a notable fact.



VI. THE DEAD SEA AND THE JORDAN.

IF the road from Bethlehem to Mar Saba is so bad, what can be said of the road to the Dead Sea which is worse? At the commencement of the journey we passed "along the very brink of a chasm partly on a natural ledge of rock, and partly on an artificial cutting," as the guide-book foretold. For five hours we were among "naked grey ridges, and naked grey ravines," in the awful solitudes of Engedi. We passed, during the journey, at a short distance from us, a small building or *wely* (saint's tomb), called Neby Mûsa, where Mahomedan tradition says Moses was buried. But as we were unanimous in preferring the grand story of Holy Writ, which distinctly states he was buried "in a valley in the land of Moab over against Bethpeor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day," (Deut. xxxiv. 6.) we paid but little attention to the legend.

By-and-by a scene burst upon our view which might reasonably take away the breath. There before us stretched the long chain of the mountains of Moab like a huge blue wall; beneath it lay that "great and melancholy marvel," the Dead Sea, belying, from the distance we were at, all the hard things that have been

said against it ; there at our feet lay the valley of the Jordan, and the dark line of foliage running through it, we were told, marked the course of that sacred river. It was a view which I had not expected, never having associated the idea of beauty with the Dead Sea or the wilderness of Judea ; but from the height on which we were, and taking in a very vast view with nothing particular in detail, the effect was really very fine. The mountains or hills of Moab would redeem any view from tameness ; they can be seen from so many places in Southern Palestine, and they form the background of many an exquisite picture. I have seen them from great distances, and close at hand, sometimes luminous with the golden light of sunset, sometimes dark and sombre in the gloaming, oftentimes wearing that rich blue tone which painters introduce into their pictures, and the uninitiated declare are overdone with colour ; but always, in whatever light, and from whatever view, those hills were beautiful.

As we had them in such full view on our way to the Dead Sea, we tried to make out some of the positions which are memorable in history, and especially the peak of Pisgah. But it was in vain, and we were obliged to content ourselves with knowing that we looked down—from an opposite point of view it is true—on the same sea, and the same river, and the same mountain ranges upon which Moses gazed when, "with his eye not dim, nor his natural force abated," he beheld the goodly land of Canaan.

After we had been for more than an hour approach-

ing the sea, which seemed very near, one or two of us, tired of riding, gave up our horses and took to our feet for a stroll. We thought half an hour must certainly bring us to the shore, for we were beginning to descend towards it ; but distances are so very deceptive in Palestine, that an object ten miles away seems sometimes to be but, comparatively, a stone's throw off. So we found it on this day, and after a six miles' walk under a burning sun, sometimes along an old water course, and anon over chalky hill sides, we were glad to get on our horses again, for our destination seemed as far off as ever.

We noticed as we descended to the plain, what so many travellers have observed and described before ; namely, an exhalation like a white cloud rising from the sea in exquisite relief, with the dark hills of Moab behind it, and assuming at times a fantastic spiral shape. We could not but recall the verse which others have read over and over again under similar circumstances ; "And Abraham looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and lo ! the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." (Gen. xix. 25).

And here let me make a remark upon coincidences. Before visiting Palestine, I had read a great many books about it, and the impression left upon my mind was, that every author must have copied largely from other authors, as their experiences in some instances tallied so exactly. But each one who goes there carries in his hand the Bible as his guide book to the

land, and he is on the look-out for everything which shall agree with that. For example, I saw a withered fig-tree near Jericho. I saw dogs in the place of Jezreel. I saw men toiling in rowing on the Lake of Galilee. I saw a woman with a pitcher coming out of Shechem ;—in fact I saw a thousand and one things which illustrated the Bible, and the Bible illustrated ; and these making an impression on my mind, I recorded them. Every other traveller sees just the same sights, or may do, for they are the things one expects to see, and may be seen constantly. And thus the similarity is produced. I mention this for I have just taken up a book where the writer makes a note of an exhalation, probably exactly similar to the one I saw, and he quotes the same verse that I have quoted.

At length we reached the plain, and making our way through a strange jungle of curious vegetation, most remarkable of all in appearance, being a kind of reed with pods full of something like cotton wool (this is by no means a strictly botanical description), and a rank grass which cut the hand if passed through it lightly, and the well-known apples of Sodom—about which more anon—we came to the shores of the accursed Lake.

Here again I was "agreeably disappointed," and looked in vain for the awful gloom and deadliness of the place. The shore was not strewn with masses of dead and whitened trees ;—the water looked bewitchingly bright and beautiful, and reflected every

minute detail of the surroundings as in a burnished mirror. But this was a first impression—after an hour or so upon its shore I experienced its awful stillness, became aware of the total lack of vegetation, pined for, if only one yard, of shadow, and *felt* the absence of life. I cannot define the solitude of the place. I can believe that on a moonlight night the scene would be as exquisite as any of our English lakes; and yet there is a *something* about it besides its historical associations which makes one feel awed. In Norway when the midnight sun is shining, the traveller who has taken no thought of time, and does not know for a fact that it is not mid-day, is yet aware of an *awfulness* even in the midst of profound beauty. So at the Dead Sea, there is a something peculiar to it which you *feel* more than you see.

I did not bathe, although the majority of our party did, and it was very amusing to watch them, some trying hard to sink and failing; some lying on the very top of the water; one stout gentleman, heaviest at the head, struggling in vain to keep his perpendicular; others, who could not swim a yard before, now swimming and floating with the greatest ease. It is certain that the buoyancy of the water has not been exaggerated—nor its stinging properties. How our tourists yelled when they first went in! Some had sore lips, or scorched faces, or dilapidated agnails, and the intense salt of the water made them cry out in torture. It was for this reason I did not venture in; hard pit-a-pat riding on Judas Maccabeus, with

a Syrian saddle, having taken the skin off my legs.

I strolled along the shore in search of curiosities, and picked up a dead fish, probably brought down by the Jordan, which runs into the lake hard by, and had been killed by contact with the water and washed up on to the shore. Also a few dead locusts, probably tempted to drink of the treacherous water, and destroyed in consequence ; and these, as an Irish clergyman of our party characteristically remarked, were the only signs of life. Many writers say that the shores of the Dead Sea—this northern shore, the only part we visited, included—are rich in objects of natural history, such as small birds, in abundance, wild ducks, partridges, and sandpipers in considerable quantities. I speak only of what I have seen, and my experience is very limited, only extending to a few hours, but I may confidently assert that I did not see a living thing there, neither bird, beast, fish, nor insect.

It would be tedious to tell again the story of the Dead Sea. Everybody knows about it, but those who want a scientific account of its many wonders, should read the elaborate work of De Saulcy, and those who would learn its history can refer with advantage to Smith's Dictionary of the Bible. Enough for us to say that it is the most wonderful sea in the world as to its origin and history ; that its waters contain 26 per cent. of saline matter ; that it is 1292 feet below the Mediterranean ; and that it bears

unequivocal testimony to the truth of holy writ, and the righteous judgment of God.

We were very glad once more to mount and ride over the plain towards our halting place by the Jordan.

This last sentence seems to relate but a trifling circumstance, but I should like every one who has been brought up in a northern climate to try that journey. The heat was terrific. I don't know any other word for it. There seemed not to be a breath of air astir, and the sun beat down upon us fiercely. All around was desolation, a sandy waste, with here and there the sand drifted into hillocks, and salt, evaporated from the Dead Sea, lying upon and around them like snow. Moreover, we were painfully thirsty, and, by an oversight, not a drop of water was there to be had ; for three or four hours I had been sucking a pebble to create a little saliva in my parched mouth. Happily our journey from the Dead Sea to the pilgrims' bathing place was but of an hour and fifteen minutes' duration, and we had the prospect of water and shade beneath the rich vegetation on the banks of the Jordan. Our dragomans, whether to keep up our spirits or not I cannot say, declared that the weather was cooler than ordinary at that season of the year (March 15th), but what hotter weather meant seemed like a riddle, and so we gave it up.

When we arrived at the river, there was a rush to the bank, and like Gideon's six hundred we lapped at the stream. Like leviathan, we thought we could "draw

up Jordan into our mouths." From circumstances like these, trivial as they seem to put into a book, we learnt more than many sermons could teach. In that dry and thirsty land there was a lasting significance given to passages of Scripture like these, "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!" "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

And did the first view of the Jordan realise your expectations? some may ask. I candidly confess it did not. It is an insignificant river, and seems altogether unworthy of the grand language of poets and psalmists employed in its description. It "flows through a tortuous glen;" is not more than half the width of the Thames at London Bridge, and the water is muddy and dirty. A humorous American writer who has said many things in his book which had been better left unsaid, and has mixed profanity with humour, has made nevertheless some very good common-sense remarks about the exaggerated ideas many good people have of Palestine. Speaking of the fact, that travel and experience sometimes mar the grandest pictures, and rob us of the most cherished traditions of our boyhood, he says,—

"When I was a boy, I somehow got the impression that the river Jordan was four thousand miles long and thirty-five miles wide. It is only ninety miles long, and so crooked that a man does not know which side of it he is on half the time. In going ninety miles, it does not get over more than fifty

miles of ground. It is not any wider than Broadway in New York. There is the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea*—neither of them twenty miles long or thirteen wide. And yet when I was in Sunday school I thought they were sixty thousand miles in diameter."

Our Dead Sea bathers were looking like millers with the white salt caking on their faces, and feeling very sticky into the bargain, so an immediate bathe was the order of the day. The water was deliciously cool, and the current so swift as to carry us off our feet, and quite impossible to swim against. The necessity, therefore, was to ford the river, and then walk up the opposite shore, and taking a header, be whirled down with the stream to the ford again. But this was rather painful work, as it involved scratches from the brushwood and peril to the feet over loose stones. Still it was bathing in the Jordan, and no one seemed to care much for these little drawbacks.

After luncheon we wandered about, each seeking his own company, and a shady spot in which to enjoy it. But there was no shade—the sun was right overhead; neither was there any air; and as I lay on a bank with my books, the perspiration poured down my face without the slightest provocation.

Before speaking of the wonderful history of this sacred river, I must narrate one or two little incidents,

* This statement as to the Jordan is incorrect. The Dead Sea is 40 geographical, or 46 English miles long.

for little incidents were always cropping up, and in the heat and weariness it was easier to give attention to them than to books or thoughts.

Just after I had taken up my position on the bank for a quiet read, there was a hubbub among the muleteers; one of the horses had got loose from the tree to which he was tied, and going down to the river to drink, had been carried off his feet by the swift current. He tried his hardest to bear up against the stream, but was nevertheless being borne rapidly down. In less than two minutes half a dozen Arabs had thrown off their clothes, no difficult task, and were in after him, some above, some below. One, caught by the current, was whirled down to the beast, and whirled past before he could right himself; another came slap upon him, and in a moment had mounted his back in the water, but this the poor brute resented, and our energetic darkie was 50 yards off in almost as many seconds. Finally the reins were caught by one of the men, and man and beast got safely over to the opposite shore. These six naked Arabs had all their work to pull the horse up the steep bank, and when they had got him there they walked him down to a convenient place, where the current would wash them across, and all plunging in together, they made a rare splash and hullabaloo excited as they were with the amusement of the chase. Arabs seem as much at home in the water as on horseback; in fact, they enter into every manly sport with a gusto which is very refreshing to witness.

After this I sat down again, and one of the tourists came and sat down beside me. A strange compound was my friend ; nobody knew why he had come out on this tour, as he seemed to take little or no interest in Palestine. He was well up in classical matters, but painfully ignorant of Scripture. He said to me in a confidential sort of way, "What on earth are they all making such a fuss about this muddy dirty little river. I can't say I see anything very wonderful in it. What *is* its special interest?"

"Many things," I replied, as good-temperedly as I could under the circumstances, "but principally because in this river our Saviour was baptized!"

"God bless my soul; you don't say so!" he exclaimed, with no small astonishment.

You will smile at the absurdity of this; but I made a note in my mind as follows, which is my excuse for recording the circumstance. There are men in our Christian England as near to the sacred places where Christ is to be found, and yet are as ignorant of the fact as my friend was of the interest in Jordan. There are men who see the cross, but never see the Christ upon it; men who hear the Word, but recognise not the Master's voice in it; men who walk through a cemetery, and never think of the Resurrection and the Life. Men, alas! who go down to that other Jordan—"the narrow stream of death"—and know nothing of it, or of Him who has passed through it to make a passage for them! So we need not smile much at ignorance in a point of history and geography

such as my companion displayed, when that same ignorance in principle is around us on every hand.

Sites on the Jordan are very difficult to identify, and there are many theories about them. We leave all this to the learned to discuss, contenting ourselves by knowing that many have agreed in considering that most of the mighty events recorded in Scripture occurred close by the place where we were resting. And so, as the waters rushed past at my feet, I let the panorama of the past glide along before me too, and tried to picture that scene when the Israelites, under the command of Joshua, came down from the mountains of Moab and camped on that bank over there. "And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan, and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people; and as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water (for Jordan overfloweth all his banks at the time of harvest), that the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan: and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan." (Josh. iii. 14-17.)

See, too, that miracle performed again and again. Two holy men walk down towards the river, one is soon to pass into the other world, and the other has sworn as the Lord liveth, he will not leave him. "And Elijah took his mantle and wrapped it together and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on dry ground," (2 Kings ii. 8.) The chariot from heaven tarried for the prophet, and then carried him to the eternal mansions without the passage through that stream which this typified. And then when they were parted, Elisha returned, most likely to the same spot, perhaps to this very place on which we gaze, and with trembling hands taking that mantle which had fallen from his illustrious predecessor, to test whether the power of God was indeed with him, he smote the waters and they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over.

We look again to see the crowds flocking around the austere hermit, whose dwelling was in the adjacent wilderness, and we see those coming to him to be baptized who had trembled at the "voice crying in the wilderness," which had rung out through the solitudes the watchword of salvation, "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It has often been suggested that the place of baptism was in the very place where Elijah, his great forerunner, had passed; where he had finished his course, the Baptist, in the spirit and power of Elias, commenced his.

Last of all, we see that Mighty One, the world's

great conqueror, Jesus, the meek and lowly, fulfilling all righteousness, and standing in that river as the One who came to stand in man's stead and "become sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Over our heads once shone the heavenly glory, and round about this river bank, there came the accents of the divine voice, saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

A feeling of awe creeps over the traveller, as he *realises* that he is in the very midst of these glorious associations, and this feeling is heightened by another; that strange feeling of religious sympathy, or discernment of spirit, which, perhaps, all at some time or another have felt. I know not exactly how to express my meaning; but at some very sacred religious assembly, have you never felt a thrill of unity as though your spirit could fraternise and be at one with the spirit of every one present? Have you not felt something akin to this on Christmas Eve, when the joy of all the Christian world was shared by you? Or on New Year's Eve, as the bells rang out to the wild sky to usher it in, and you felt your confessions and prayers mingled with those of myriads who looked into the unknown, with the same hopes and fears as yourself? Well, on that day at Jordan, besides the sense of historical association, I felt as if I had come to the meeting-place of all sorrowful souls; thought wandered on to God's waiting people in all the world, to whom this river stands as the type

of that stream which separates this world from the next. I thought of those who

Lingered, shivering on the brink,
And feared to launch away.

Of the great warrior band,

One army of the living God,
To whose command we bow ;
Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now.

I thought of the visions which tearful eyes have seen of this river ; of the broken voices of the desolate who have whispered its name ; of the many hymns which from childhood to age have been sung about it ; and as my own tears flowed in memory of one who had but recently crossed that stream which divides the heavenly land from ours, I felt a consolation in coming in spirit to this communion of the world's great sorrow, and strove to catch a shadowy glimpse into that far-off land, where the victors who have crossed the flood, shout, "Thanks be unto God which hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

And now for a ramble through the jungle, just to see a little of the wondrous vegetation on the banks of the river. It is still the home of the panther and the wild boar, which Frank and Edwin, who had joined me, hoped and prayed they might meet, while I hoped and prayed they might not. We started many birds in our little excursion, and listened to the

songs of some singing as sweetly as our English favourites. It is said, that the song of the nightingale may be heard here ; we did not hear it, but we heard notes almost if not quite as exquisite, from an invisible songster. We gazed in wonderment on forests of oleanders just bursting into bloom, with their pink buds peeping through ; on tamarisks, on apples of Sodom, on treacherous thorns, on waving willows, and on reeds that would be shaken with the wind, if there were any stirring. And then we said, farewell to Jordan for the present, hoping to visit it again at its source later in our travels, and turned our horses' heads towards Jericho.





VII. FROM JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.

AS we moved in our large cavalcade slowly across the plain towards Jericho, a beautiful breeze sprung up, and made this part of the journey, which is generally so very trying to travellers, quite pleasant. Half an hour after leaving the Jordan, the plain becomes more fruitful, and as the ground is hard and level, we can indulge in a canter, which is very refreshing in the breeze. Before us we have the mountain of Quarantania, and the distant view of Jericho fills us with anticipations of almost forest scenery.

But as we draw near to Rîha, the modern Jericho, the site of ancient Gilgal, we are at once disposed to give up any attempt to realise beauty of any sort in this place. Of all horrible and disgusting spots in the Holy Land, there is none worse than Rîha. The "town" is a mere heap of rubbish, into which the inhabitants appeared to have burrowed, and made themselves dwelling-places. It is surrounded by a thick hedge of *nubb* (which is as strong a defence as a wall with broken glass at the top would be, every branch being armed with sharp spikes), and looks very much like some of the wretched heaps of mud in which the

lowest of the low in Egypt live. All Jericho came out to see us as we passed, and a more repulsive set of human beings I never saw. They were miserably clothed—many of the children quite naked,—and I should say that an "old clo'" man would not have given a couple of shillings for all the wearing apparel exhibited by the whole population. It is said that morally Jericho is the most debased and degraded place in Palestine, and that the sins for which the cities of the plain were destroyed are rife amongst them. It is an awful thing to look upon this wretched village, and then across to those glistening waters of the Dead Sea, beneath which lie the ruins of those guilty cities. No wonder that travellers like to hurry past this place, for it is full of filth and vermin, and vice has so stamped its impress upon the features of the inhabitants, that one is glad to turn away from beholding faces so demoniacal and repulsive. There is only one object of any interest to inspect here, and that is a massive square tower, probably dating from the time of the Crusades, said to mark the site of the house of Zaccheus. But we did not pause to examine it minutely, and rather regret this afterwards, as the view from the top—it is about 30 or 40 feet high—is said to be well worth seeing.

Gladly we hailed the sight of our tents, for our day's work had fatigued us all greatly. It was interesting for us to know that we were encamped on the site of ancient Jericho. A strong guard was with us for the sake of protection, and after the many sus-

picious looking people we had seen lurking about, it did not seem at all unadvisable to have them. But we had to be on our guard with our guard, and were recommended not to leave anything about in our tents which hands might handle.

It was late, and we had taken in as much as the mind could absorb. Every day we regretted that our time was so limited, and that we could not linger at the places we visited, for there was so little time for reflection, and not one of our party seemed able to go in for much reading, so that we were all day long drinking in impressions, and trying to stamp scenes indelibly into our minds, and on this night I, for one, felt as full as a sponge; and so after dinner, not even the temptation to stand amongst the ruins of Jericho by starlight, could tempt me away from the couch and the tranquil pipe, and a chat with Edwin and Frank on the events of the day. But from this repose we were disturbed, for a party of "dancers" from Jericho had come to give us a performance, and they made such a tremendous noise that we were obliged to turn out and see what was going on. They were about forty in number; the men danced a "war dance," similar to that we had seen at the Pools of Solomon, and two women went through a processional and wedding dance, in which they brandished swords (I don't know why), and made a peculiar rattling in the throat, which is supposed to represent delight. It was a very curious, but not a very pleasing exhibition.

Next morning we were astir very early to see all

that is to be seen of Jericho. It is not much ; mounds of rubbish, rough stones, and ruinous heaps. The once beautiful "city of palm trees" is accursed, and is desolate. The thorny apple of Sodom is almost the only shrub that grows luxuriantly ; not a vestige of a palm tree is to be seen. In the times of the Crusades the pilgrims always brought home with them a palm branch from Jericho, and this they placed upon the altar of their parish church when they received the blessing awaiting their return. It was from this custom that pilgrims gained the name of "palmer."

There is one spot of great interest not far from here, and to that we repaired. It is a high mound ; and at its base there issues forth a clear sparkling fountain. It hurries away in a silvery stream, and its banks are fringed with beautiful foliage and delicate flowers, amongst them the iris, the cycleman, and the blue-eyed forget-me-not. It is the fountain 'Ain es Sultân, better known as the Fountain of Elisha. You remember the story, how the prophet came from Jordan, which he had divided with the wonder-working mantle, and tarried in Jericho, and the men of the place said to him, "Behold the situation of this city is pleasant,"—a statement which must always have been true,—“but the water is naught, and the ground barren.” So the prophet called for a cruse with salt therein, and casting it into this very “spring of the waters” he said, “Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters ; there shall not thence be any more death or barren land” (2 Kings ii. 19-22.)

We drank of the water, which is not very cool, but is very sweet, and then ascending the mound, sat down to "view the landscape o'er." Over there are cornfields, around us are heaps of rubbish and remains of what might once have been buildings; across to the east we see the great plain; we look towards the ruins, a mile or so away, where stood the Jericho which Jesus visited and effected his marvellous cure on the blind men; and then away to the mountains which seem to encircle the plain. Everywhere we look we see pictures of the past, every inch of ground in that great landscape has a history.

We "put our heads together" to try and make out some of the situations. It was across yonder plain that the spies journeyed; round here went up those great walls on which Rahab had her house; over there, in the mountains, we seem as if we could make out the very place where the spies hid themselves; it was here that Joshua's army went round the city, and these hills echoed back the shrill blast of the trumpets which the priests blew. And when the seventh day had come, there went up from this spot the great shout of the people, mingling with the blast of the trumpets, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat. Then came that fearful panic, followed by blood and havoc and death. It was somewhere close by here that Rahab with her kindred sat with tear-dimmed eyes and saw the smoke of the burning city ascending. And, perhaps, it was on some high-standing ground near here that Joshua, in the presence of

all Israel, stood, and pointing to that charred and ruined mass, that had once been the strong city of Jericho, cried, "Cursed be the man before the Lord that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall be set up the gates of it" (Josh. vi.)

Despite the curse, five hundred years afterwards, a man was found who dared to rebuild the city, and who fulfilled the prediction by inheriting the curse (1 Kings, xvi. 34.)

Half-an-hour from this place, by the Wady Kelt—which, as some suppose, is identical with the Brook Cherith whither Elijah fled, and was fed by the ravens, as we were told in our young days, but by "Arabs," as some of our learned divines tell us—is, as I have already said, the site of Jericho which our Lord visited. There was, therefore, the Jericho which Joshua destroyed, the Jericho rebuilt by Hiel, the Jericho of our Lord's time, and now the modern Jericho or Rîha.

We make an excursion to the foot of the mountain of Quarantania (*forty days*). It is a bleak and rugged hill, rising from the plain abruptly, to a height of about 1500 feet, or perhaps more. Its sides are pierced with holes and caves and grottoes, where in old time, anchorites, who thought they did God service by making themselves miserable, were proud of resorting to lead holy lives of seclusion; for this is the traditional scene of our Lord's temptation, and they would resist where He resisted and overcame. It is a very

doubtful tradition, however, and none of us were enthusiastic enough to climb the height, for the morning was excessively hot. Whether it was the place of the Temptation or not, there certainly is not a more desolate spot to be seen anywhere in this immediate neighbourhood—such a striking contrast to the quiet secluded beauty of the 'Ain Sultân—certainly it is a “great and high mountain” in comparison with some other of the mountains of Scripture; but “all the kingdoms of the world” could not have been seen from it, nor in fact from any mountain in Palestine; and certainly these caverns must have been a haunt of the wild beasts, lions, bears, wolves, and panthers. One of our dragomans told me that the last lion that was ever seen alive in Palestine was in one of these grottoes of Quarantania. I may tell what I was told.

At the foot of the mountain there are occasional patches or thickets of the *nubk*; this tree, which is known also as the “dom” or lote-tree, is said to be that from which the crown of thorns was made. On one tree a friend of mine in the party found a crown of thorns, made and suspended on a bough, evidently the work of some pious pilgrim. It corresponded very well to that of the celebrated picture, “Ecce Homo;” and its sharp strong spikes, placed roughly on the head, would be a cruel and painful crown.

And now we start on the journey from Jericho to Jerusalem, the road which our Saviour travelled when He went to raise His friend Lazarus to life—the road

which is known to all in the story of the good Samaritan. It is a long, rough, and tedious journey; and Judas Maccabeus was in an uncomfortable frame of mind, and went his pit-a-pat with such vehemence as soon to make me in an uncomfortable frame of body. He would lag behind, and any gentle reminder from my long tchibouk stem (which served me for a pipe when I rested, a staff when I walked, and a whip when I rode) only made him skittish, and I did not care to be the last of the party; for, apart from the memories of the "certain man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves," I remembered the stories of travellers of more recent date who had been robbed and murdered upon this road, and had seen two or three villanous-looking rogues, who I doubted not would have gladly followed up if they saw me lagging far behind. However, as we entered the wild glen and commenced the stiff ascent, our Bedouin guard, numbering, if I remember rightly, about thirty men, divided themselves, some going ahead and others falling to the rear, and an occasional "touch up" from them brought Judas to his senses. The sheikhs bore the long spear-headed poles which are so pretty to look at, and seem as if they would be so much in the way in case of a scrimmage, and in the girdles of all were huge blunderbusses, and at their sides heavy sabres.

Anywhere along this road might be the scene of the good Samaritan story, barring the ditches; everywhere it is dreary and desolate, in some places so

wild as to make one shudder ; and everywhere, it is adapted from its utter solitariness, for scenes of plunder and bloodshed. Looking back on one stage of the journey, we have a glorious view of the great valley of the Jordan, and in the dazzling morning light, can see the spots which we have visited in the early morning and on the previous day—Riha—the dark jungle on the banks of the Jordan (the river itself being hidden), the broad wilderness valley, the glistening Dead Sea, and the great wall of Moab. One part of the road is thus described by Dr Olin, quoted in the guide book. “The mountains seem to have been loosened from their foundations, and rent to pieces by some terrible convulsion, and then left to be scathed by the burning rays of the sun.” The description is very good, and it corresponds with what one of our travellers had said, “I suppose all the world will look a mass of confusion, something like this, after it has been burnt up with fervent heat at the last day !”

Bad as the road is, it is yet a thousand-fold better than it was. Mr Cook, the conductor of our party, wrote a letter to the *Times*, descriptive of our tour, and I quote a paragraph on this subject.

“Speaking of roads that lead to the capital of this ancient land of promise, those who a couple of years ago, ‘went down from Jerusalem to Jericho,’ will be astonished and gratified to hear that a road has been constructed over which a carriage might be drawn, except in the more precipitous parts, which are terraced by wide steps, the old natural pavement of

limestone and jagged rocks having been quarried or blasted, so that horses may now tread in safety, and pilgrims can make their way to the Jordan with less than half the former toil. The great improvement is said to have resulted from an accident that befell a Wallachian princess, who, to save her poorer pilgrims from falling, has given a thousand pounds for the making of the new road. Princes and princesses are sometimes sadly in the way of plebeian tourists, when they monopolise and enhance the cost of travelling and hotel accommodation ; but on Saturday last, the blessings of two score ladies and gentlemen, to say nothing of as many saddle horses, three score mules, and one score donkeys, with nearly three score mule-teers, dragomans, and camp servants, were cheerfully awarded to the lady who honoured her title by this useful outlay of money. Who can tell that this improvement may not lead to the cultivation of those once fertile plains which lie between the fountain of Elisha and the Jordan ? What the Nile does for Egypt, the Jordan on one side, and copious fountains on the other, might do for the plains of Jericho and the Jordan, if practicable, and every means of irrigation were adopted."

We come at last to the ruins of an old khan, said by some to be the inn where the good Samaritan left his patient, and here we halted for a couple of hours in the heat of the day, seeking what little shade could be found under the broken walls and ruined arches of the caravansery. These halting-places on the way were

always very delightful, and it was at times like these that we realised the advantage and pleasure of having so large and diversified a party. It was a daily picnic of forty to fifty souls, and as we always had our guides and Bibles and note-books out at these seasons, it was interesting to compare experiences and gain information, one from the other. Sometimes we beguiled an hour in sport with our Arab attendants, and their eyes would glisten with delight, when an empty bottle was set up on a far-off heap of stones as a "cock-shy." I used sometimes to improve these occasions by teaching them some English school-boy games, such as a knuckle-down at marbles, or hopscotch ; and although to the grave and heavy, this may seem very ridiculous, to them it was a great fund of entertainment, and we never regretted the time thus spent, although it was not very often we indulged in it. The little adventures on the road always made an amusing theme for conversation as we sat on our mats, with luncheon before us, and on this occasion we had to bemoan the fate of a rather "horsey" tourist, who had been mounted on an ungovernable beast, which he declared had "buck-jumped"—whatever that may mean—and had nearly sent him spinning into the next world. The unmeasured terms in which he spoke of his animal, made our dragoman, Alexander, stand up to vindicate it, and this led to a little altercation, for a Syrian can ride on a bad horse as satisfactorily as on a good one, always getting pace and behaviour out of him, and therefore, if anybody

objected to a horse, the dragoman was always ready to change his for it. So words got a little high, and one of the clericals who was for peace on this occasion, as it did not involve any theological or other Biblical controversy, recommended that they should "make it up." This the dragoman was willing to do with all alacrity, and threw his arms round the neck of the poor tourist and kissed him, Arab fashion, much to the amusement of us all.

Leaving our halting-place, we made a considerable ascent for half an hour or so, and then arrived, very unexpectedly to most of us, for we did not know we were so near, at a little village where the inhabitants who had espied our great procession, were standing on walls and housetops, to see us pass. I have heard of a man who was cast into a desolate region, and had lost all idea of the day of the month, and of the day of the week. But when Sunday came round, there was in that uninhabited place, a calm, and quiet, and by a spiritual instinct, he discerned it to be the day of rest. I don't know whether the story comes from Scotland or America ; but I thought many times, when in Palestine, whether any one, without book or guide, or map, would be able, instinctively, to find out any of the places there. I believe they would.

This little village we were approaching looked so sweet and beautiful amid the luxuriant vegetation and smiling hill sides, so calm and quiet, that it scarcely needed for any one to say, "That is *Bethany!*"

Years ago that little band, with Jesus in the midst,

came up this very hill, and Martha ran to meet Him, while the "many people of the Jews who came to comfort the sisters concerning their brother," stood round watching His approach. How the very stones seemed to tell out the story!

Any one could realise in a moment why that place would be dear to the busy Saviour as a retreat, and how precious, after the toils of the day, must have been the peacefulness of the home of his loved friends, Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus.

We did not halt here, but passed right on. It seemed rather to surprise the villagers, who greeted us very pleasantly, but I think most of us had resolved to come again to indulge in quiet meditation in this sacred place. We continued to ascend; wound round the Church of the Ascension, and then gained the summit of Olivet.

The sight that burst upon the view, who can tell it? All are familiar with it from pictures, many who have never been there may be able to describe it almost as accurately as those who have gazed upon the scene, but no description by pen or pencil or by word can ever give the true meaning to it, or create the profound impression those feel who come suddenly upon it for the first time. I, for one, was never moved to such a strong feeling of emotion by any sight before, and never shall again till I see that Heavenly City, with its pearly gates and golden streets.

Cut off by the deep valley of Jehoshaphat, the steep slope of Olivet with its trees and shrubs form-

ing a fine foreground, Jerusalem lay before us, looking to-day, from that point of view, perhaps not one whit less magnificent than when "He beheld the city, and wept over it." Where the Temple stood is now the Mosque of Omar, standing majestically in its broad enclosure, paved with marble or covered with grass, and groups of trees placed effectively around; at the back of it lies the city, a mass of houses with the dome and minarets of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre rising conspicuously from the midst, and, further back still, the Tower of Hippicus and the citadel on Mount Zion. One's eye wanders to the hills round about Jerusalem, scans the massive walls which encompass it, peers down into the dark valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat, and seems to search for the passing by of Him, the fairer than ten thousand, and altogether lovely, whose sacred feet have trodden all these hills and dales.

It is not possible to take in the view all at once especially on horseback, surrounded by a crowd of horsemen, and I resolved to return and examine again carefully. As we stood there in the open space by the Church of the Ascension, all our horses drew closely together, and every head, as we came uncovered, I record it to the honour of my companions, there was scarcely a word spoken—he: were too full for words, and in more than one face



The Valley of Jehoshaphat — *On Holy Ground*, p. 135.

they were impatient to be off. So we descended the steep hill, crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat, ascended again, passed under the walls, with the Damascus gate on our left, and the tomb of Jeremiah on our right ; on to the Russian quarter outside the city (which you will remember we had seen as we came up from Jaffa, before turning off into the Bethlehem road), and then, not far from the Jaffa Gate, on the slope of Mount Zion, looking over the valley of Hinnom, we found our tents pitched, and a great crowd assembled to watch our approach.

Edwin had jumped from his horse and gone into the city instantanely. Frank and I tarried to have a hasty wash, and then for a walk in Jerusalem before the gates should close !

We passed through the Jaffa Gate, with the citadel on our right, into the open space close by the English Church, and here, and in the crowded street, there seemed to be collected representatives of every nation and kindred and tongue under heaven. A party of Russians in their native clothing, which looked very incongruous in that warm spring evening, were walking towards the citadel ; a group of Albanians were leaning against a wall in attitudes which were fit for an art-study, in earnest conversation ; Arabs in their striped Abbas' ; Englishmen on the steps of the Mediterranean Hotel, in knickerbockers and eye-glasses ; Jews with pale faces and lanky curls, and dressed in long robes edged with fur ; veiled women in rainbow hues, and nondescripts, *ad lib.*

On our right hand, the way was lined with stalls, like Shoreditch on a Saturday night, and strong-voiced men and boys were selling pistachio nuts, pea nuts, oranges, sweetmeats, and nameless comestibles; on the left hand was a row of cigar shops and cafés, and a public-house with "Beer sold here" written in seductive letters. What a damper to poetry and devotional sentiment! And how irritating and distressing the beggars were! Their name was legion, and their one cry was backsheesh! There lay some poor scarred and stricken lepers, wailing out their dismal cry, and we were followed by half-a-score of halt, and blind, and maimed, and withered, each with an attendant, who held up the deformed one's hand, and besought, in vehement language, for backsheesh. Some of them have picked up a little English, and know not what that little means, but they are keen enough to know we are English, and vary their cry of "backsheesh" into "Sir, give me backsheesh," or "John, give us backsheesh." But for the comfort of all travellers I would urge them not to let their left hand know what their right hand is doing in matters of promiscuous charity in Jerusalem, for no sooner have you given to one than you are deluged with cries from all, and followed up in some cases, it may be to the length and breadth of the city, till in despair you are glad to turn out all the small coins you have in your pocket, and then you regret it afresh on the morrow.

I wanted some money changed, and so was glad

to turn away from the crowd into the house of a changer. It was the first house I entered in Jerusalem,—a dull, dingy place enough, which any court out of Basinghall Street might have been ashamed to own, and there on a couch sat an old Jew, with dark twinkling eyes, a grey beard hanging down over his breast, and a black skull cap—counting a huge bag of gold!! To this day I cannot shake from my mind the impression that he gave us less than the current rate of discount entitled us to receive, but I would not on any consideration assert this as a fact.

As we came out hundreds of people were coming up the steep, uneven, and badly paved street, and thinking that something must be going on we made our way in the direction from which the crowd proceeded. In a few minutes we found ourselves in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At least a couple of thousand of people must have been there—such a motley crowd I never saw before, nor can such a sight be seen anywhere but in the East. In a line from the doorway of the Church, right across the courtyard, there was drawn up a strong body of Turkish soldiers with bayonets fixed, stationed there to keep the peace between the rival sects. A guard of soldiers to keep the peace among Christians around the grave of Jesus! A horrible sight, and what horrible deeds have been committed in that courtyard since the time when, if the tradition as to locality be true, the multitudes

stood round this very place and witnessed the crucifixion of the Saviour.

We squeezed through the crowd still pouring out and then entered the Church. The first thing we saw was a slab, over which hung many silver lamps. It is positively worn down in parts by the lips of pilgrims. It is the slab on which the body of Jesus was laid when they took it down from the cross. We stood a short way off; many pilgrims were around the stone, some were weeping honest tears as they knelt and prayed beside it, and some, prostrate on the ground, were devoutly kissing the places where the head and feet had lain. I almost envied those people, and wished I could throw off the trammel of my Protestant notions, and have joined them in their devotions. Had I been alone, in the fervour of the moment I think I should have done so, — not thrown off my Protestantism, but that reserve and fear of enthusiasm which clings to it, as the love of the morose and sombre clings to dissent. I felt it was no place at which to cavil, no place to think of sects and parties, and IF (and all who visit Palestine, unless bound on scientific discovery, ought, for their own enjoyment, to accept as genuine everything that is not obviously false), *if* that is the spot where Jesus lay, I know of no reason up to this present moment why I should not have kissed it reverently and devoutly, as I would have kissed His feet had His dead body been there.

A waft of beautiful music drew us into a "chapel"

close by, and here, amid gilt and tinsel in gorgeous display, richly robed priests were muttering sentences which seemed a good deal like incantations ; and a well-trained choir broke in most effectively with responses.

Night was drawing on, and as we should visit all these places again and again, we turned our faces camp-wards. On our way we met the French Consul walking in state, his body guard tramping to the sound of their silver wands planted in measured time upon the stones. Walking in state on the uneven stones of a Jerusalem street is ticklish work, and in our hearts we wished the Consul joy of it.





VIII.—A SUNDAY IN JERUSALEM.

fulness, seeming rather to enjoy the curling wreaths of tobacco which were blown forth for their destruction.

But we were not obliged to be up at four, as we had been doing for some mornings past, and were able to enjoy a good heavy sleep in the morning. There was an amount of pleasurable excitement, however, in the anticipation of Sunday in Jerusalem, which would not let any of us rest beyond seven. When we met at breakfast it was quite refreshing to see the elaborate toilets the party had made, ladies in blue silks or summer tissues, gentlemen in white linen and other "shore clothes," and the clergy in snow white ties, exquisitely starchey, and lankey black coats. Everybody looked—and was—intent upon having a good time of it that Sabbath day.

Frank, Edwin, and I set our tent in order, spread a railway rug for a table cloth, and commenced the day, with a quiet read and posting up of notes. It was a great treat to sit at the tent door, Bible in hand, and to read some of the stories of that wonderful city beneath whose walls we were encamped, and I had determined, for this day at least, not to dwell upon the controversies about sites, a thing which doth so easily beset us in this land, but to try and realise the fact that I was in Jerusalem, the scene of our Saviour's teaching, labours, miracles, shame, death, and glorious resurrection. To-morrow we should begin the exploration of the city and its thousand and one holy places in the spirit of critical inquiry, but to-day we would

drink in all the influences which the scenes around us

... .

It started a train of thought which was intensely interesting to follow out. This day the plot of ten thousand sermons in all Christian lands, will be laid in this city. Hundreds of people from all parts of the world are on their pilgrimage to worship at these sacred shrines. Thousands of Sunday school teachers are this morning telling to wondering children the sweet story of old, which happened within a stone's-cast of the place where we are worshipping. And the sick and dying, men of every kindred, nation, and people, and tongue, are directing their thoughts to the time when they shall come "to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." (Heb. xii. 22-23.)

The charm of the service seemed to culminate in the singing of Reginald Heber's hymn, which is beautiful anywhere, but had a thrilling significance in that place, and with those surroundings. Listen to it.

"Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
Enthronéd once on high,
Thou favoured home of God on earth,
Thou heaven below the sky ;
Now brought to bondage with thy sons
A curse and grief to see,
Jerusalem ! Jerusalem !
Our tears shall flow for thee.

"O had'st thou known thy day of grace,
And flocked beneath the wing
Of Him who called thee lovingly
Thine own anointed King ;
Then had the tribes of all the world
Gone up thy pomp to see,
And glory dwelt within thy gates,
And all thy sons been free.

"And who art thou that mournest me?"
Jerusalem may say,
"And fear'st not rather that thyself
May prove a cast-away ;
I am a dried and abject branch,
My place is given to thee,
But woe to every barren graft
Of thy wild olive tree !

"Our day of grace is sunk in night,
Our time of mercy spent,
For heavy was my children's crimes,
And strange their punishment ;
Yet gaze not idly on our fall,
But, sinner, warned be,
Who spared not His chosen seed,
May send His wrath on thee.

"Our day of grace is sunk in night.
Thy noon is in its prime,
O ! turn and seek the Saviour's face
In this accepted time ;
So, Gentile, may Jerusalem
A lesson prove to thee,
And in the new Jerusalem
Thy home for ever be."

The sermon, a plain, simple, earnest discourse, setting forth the "truth as it is in Jesus," was preached by Bishop Gobat from the words, "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus, how he became poor for your sakes, that ye through his poverty might be made rich."—(2 Cor. viii. 9).

As we came out of the church the boys of Bishop Gobat's school saluted us by raising their hats. It was quite a voluntary proceeding on their parts, and one which the boys of many an English school would do well to imitate. We were strangers and pilgrims in that land, and they paid us respect, and gave us welcome. I got into conversation with one of the boys, a bright intelligent little fellow of about twelve years of age, the son of Jews converted to the Christian faith. He could speak with fluency in three languages, and told us, in answer to our questions, some of the history of the places around us with a readiness and a grace which reflected great credit upon his instructors. I asked him about himself, and he said, "I am a Christian." "And what do you mean by that?" I said. "I mean that I am not holding the faith of a Moslem or a Jew," he answered. "And do you know that there is a better idea of a Christian than that; all are not Israel that are *of* Israel, and all are not of Christ who are called Christians." "O, yes, Sir, I know all about that, good Bishop Gobat teaches all that to us."

I liked to hear that, and thanked God for one in

that city representing Christ whom a child in the street should designate as *good* Bishop Gobat.

Frank and I took a walk after the service, first, to explore Mount Zion. The voice of Scripture rang in our memories. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King." It is still beautiful for situation, rising high above the valley of Hinnom, but we could not "go round about Zion telling the towers thereof, marking well her bulwarks, and considering her palaces," for Zion is laid low, her glory has departed, her site is ploughed, as the Scriptures prophesied, her palaces have crumbled into dust, and their memories lie low beneath the rubbish and accumulation of ages, and where once waved the lion of the tribe of Judah, now floats the crescent, the emblem of infidel dominion. Then we strolled through the streets to Mount Moriah. It was strange and pitiful to see the Lord's day desecrated in the Lord's own land. All the shops were open, bazaars were full, the money changers were clanking their gold, Arabs were wrangling and gesticulating angrily, as is their wont, come Sunday come week-day, and from the different consulates flags of the great nations were waving, the symbols of Gentile power and supremacy.



A Street in Jerusalem.— *On Holy Ground*, p. 147.

immense, from the mighty deeds which have been done in it. But this is an ignorant error, as that of supposing that every foreigner must be deaf.

The streets of Jerusalem are for the most part badly paved ; the houses ill built, and the people of an inferior stamp. This, by the way, is one of the things which cannot fail to strike a casual observer as much as any thing. Where are the grandees ? You never see them in the streets. The consulates and the convents seem the only decent houses. There are no equipages of any kind, the city not being constructed to accommodate them. And you may stay in the place a week or more and never meet any one with a retinue or surroundings which would lead you to suppose they belonged to the *élite*.

Jerusalem is a busy place. Within the small compass of its walls—only two miles and a quarter in circumference—there live 14,000 people, and the vast majority of these *seem* to live almost exclusively out of doors.

We could not pass through these crowded streets without being vividly reminded of Him who once mingled with the throng. All day working. All day working in His appointed sphere. All day working a difficult work. Trying to make men believe, and in doing so, suiting his Infinite Intelligence to the mean capacities of the poor and the illiterate. All day working in the face of opposition. Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, civil, political, and religious powers all against Him, and He a homeless wanderer. All

day long taxed and oppressed with the wily and crafty, ever seeking to entangle Him in His speech.

Did it ever strike you that *in the city* most of the hard questions of the head were put to Him, while in *the country* came to Him the questions of the heart? It is only a suggestion, it may or it may not "hold water."

In the afternoon, a few of us "like-minded,"—that is to say eight souls in all, including one clergyman who was not given to doubtful disputations, made ourselves into a little party for a stroll, and arming ourselves with maps, guide books, a hymn book or two, and bibles, we set out again through the city, coming out at St Stephen's gate. And here we had a glorious view; at our feet the valley of Jehoshaphat with its thousands of graves, and the dry bed of the Kedron; on the opposite slope, the tombs of Absalom and Zacharias, and the little village of Siloam. We wondered whether we were standing on the spot where our Saviour passed on that dark and mournful night when with His disciples, He went to Gethsemane. Surely it must have been here. There is the rough steep path leading to the valley; there is the Kedron, over which they crossed. There is the Mount of Olives, the background of every picture of great interest seen from Jerusalem; and there is the reputed site of Gethsemane. Do you wonder that we trod softly, and talked in low whispers, as those do in a house where death has entered? Do you wonder that we turned instinctively to St John's gospel, to hear "that disciple whom Jesus loved" tell us the story of his

Friend and ours? What cared we then for Popish legends or Moslem fables? We needed not to be told that *this* was the scene of one event, and *that* of another. We knew it was from the city behind us that He came forth; that it was the very brook Kedron at our feet which He crossed, and that it was in the leafy solitudes of that hill of Olivet yonder, He endured His "agony and bloody sweat." We paid no attention to that walled enclosure with its cave and its trumperies, which is called Gethsemane, and is close by what was probably always the way-side, disturbed by constant traffic, it being one of the principal approaches to the city; but we turned our eyes to those groups of olive trees higher up the hill, and selected any one of these as more congruous with our own feelings than any "show" place which might be pointed out.

There was one thing which struck us very forcibly, and that was the awful silence. As we stood there, close under the city wall, there was not a sound, not a bird in the air, not a dog in the valley, not a child from yonder village of Siloam, not even the audible buzz of an insect. And the city itself, was as quiet as a city of the dead. We could not but remark this, and paused a long time to *listen to the silence*, and when at length, we heard a sound such as the lash of a whip on the hide of a poor donkey, coming towards the city from the Bethany road, it was as startling as voices in the dead of night.

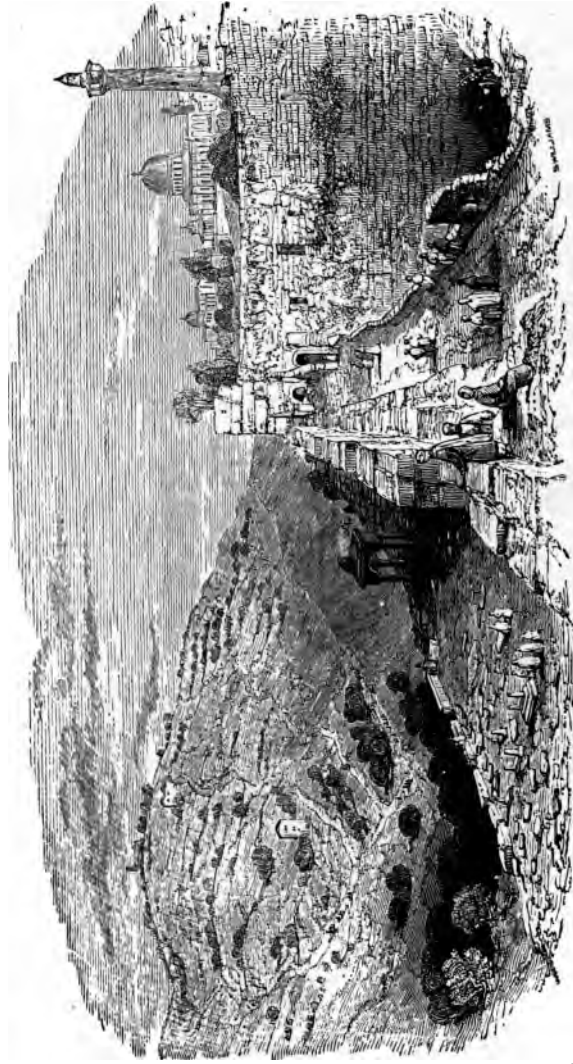
We ascended the steep path, crossed the Kedron,

and took the road leading to Bethany—the road which our Saviour came *down* on Palm Sunday. We sat down beside some olives, not very old ones, and not growing with that luxuriance they did in His day, and each betook himself to book or meditation. I tried to realise some of those scenes connected with this place, which, to my mind, stand out above all others in His personal history.

What a theme there is for thought in these words of St Luke, "In the day time he was teaching in the temple, and at night He went out and abode in the mount that is called the Mount of Olives." (Luke xxi. 37.)

Birds have their quiet nests,
Foxes their holes, and man his peaceful bed ;
All creatures have their rest,
But Jesus had not where to lay His head.

They show you a dark place in a cave under the temple, which they call the "praying place of Christ." They have mistaken the spot ; it was here He wandered when "cold mountains and the midnight air, witnessed the fervour of his prayer." It was here, He found the rest His soul needed, after the hard day with its constant heart-strain and ceaseless activity. St John gives a vivid picture in those few graphic lines, when, after describing the vexing questions of unbelief which lasted till the day was done, he adds, "And every man went unto his own house ; Jesus went unto the Mount of Olives !" (John vii. 53.)



The Mount of Olives, from the Wall.—*On Holy Ground*, p. 150.



Here, He uttered words which it was not lawful for man to hear, and found society with which even the Bethany home circle could not compare :—

Jesus was oft in prayer.
He knew His Father always stooped to hear
His faintest cry ;
And never did He shed a silent tear,
Or heave a sigh,
But God was there.
He had no earthly home,
No closet where He might shut to the door,
And out of sight
Leave the cold world, and up to heaven soar
In prayerful flight,
And see God's throne.
His was the wilderness,
His closet, was the shelter of a tree ;
The midnight air
Wafted upon its wings the mystery
Of Jesus' prayer,
In His distress.
Many a solemn hour,
When all the world was hushed in peaceful sleep,
That lonely heart
Would in some desert place long vigils keep ;
And thus, apart,
Gain heavenly power.
Once, at the close of day,
As darkness spread its mantle o'er the land,
The Saviour trod
A solitary mountain path at hand,
And then to God,
Knelt down to pray.

All through the weary night,
The moon and stars beheld Him on the ground ;
And when the dawn
Broke on the sleeping world, there He was found,
And early morn
Gazed on the sight.

Strange must have been that prayer,
Perhaps, it compassed every age and land ;
Perhaps, for aid
To cheer the faith of his disciple band,
The Saviour prayed,
And wrestled there.

Perhaps He prayed for me,
And asked that I might taste His heavenly grace,
And, when at last
All clouds and darkness that obscure His face,

majesty!" and picturing the scene when "the multitudes spread their garments in the way, while others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way, and the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David : Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord ; Hosanna in the highest !" (Matt. xxi. 8, 9.) There are no "branches of palm-trees" to be had now-a-days, for they seem to have left the neighbourhood of Olivet almost entirely ; but the custom of doing homage in the manner described by the sacred historian remains to this day. It is recorded that in the time of Ibrahim Pacha, when the Mahommedans were expelled from Bethlehem, a heavy tax was laid upon the Bethlehemites, which it was grievous for them to bear, and those who were unable to meet it were cast into prison. In this time of their trouble the English consul happened to pass that way with his retinue, and the news of the event having reached Bethlehem, all the multitude came together to meet him, spread their garments in the way for his horse to walk over, and cried out to him that the aid of England might be granted to them in their distress. So startlingly vivid was the realisation of that other scene on Olivet, that it is said the consul was moved to tears, and deeply regretted that it was not in his power to aid them.

We wound round Olivet, and the view of Jerusalem and its surroundings is completely shut out—the character of the scenery changes in a moment. Was

it not here, coming *from* Bethany, that as our Saviour rode round the hill-side, and came suddenly upon the wonderful view of Jerusalem, "He beheld the city and wept over it?" If this was not the actual spot, it was near here; and what matters the actual spot—we may be doubtful about that; we are certain of the view which met His gaze. It was somewhere upon this mountain—probably lower down—that He sat with His disciples, and they asked Him when the fulfilment of the prophecy He had delivered as they came out of the temple—when they called His attention to its great buildings and goodly stones—should be. And here, in answer to their question, He delivered the grand prophecy of the three great Epochs—the destruction of Jerusalem, the second coming of the Son of Man, and the end of the world. (Matt. xxiv. 3.)

We saw a little village "over against us," on the right hand of the road, across a gully, and it is said that this is the village to which the disciples went, and found the ass and the colt on which our Lord rode. We took this for granted.

And now we come to Bethany. It is a calm and peaceful spot, and the eye is rested and satisfied with the glorious view of the hill country, the distant hills of Moab, the glistening waters of the Dead Sea, and the green line of Jordan running through the valley. The vines, and the olives, and the figs cluster on the nearer hill-sides, and the smiling corn-fields and luxuriant "gardens" form a pleasant contrast to the

sterility of the hills nearer to Jerusalem, which we have lately left. Much is changed since those days which made Bethany famous. There is no *home* in the village now, only twenty or thirty houses built of rude massive stone, and having the dirty and untidy look of ordinary Eastern villages. There is no Martha, or Mary, or Lazarus there now; but a group of village maidens, in their snow-white dresses, were sitting under the fig-trees. No perfume of ointment very precious is to be detected, but the gentle zephyr wafts sweet odours from the lilies of the field and wayside flowers. In itself, to speak the plain honest truth, Bethany is now a miserable place, and gives but a faint idea of the Bethany of St John's Gospel. We had to bring our own Bethany with us in the memories recalled by the locality, and it was an intense delight in that place to think of the bright, brief, joyous hours in the life of the Man of Sorrows spent in this place; to picture Martha making all things ready for His coming, and Mary watching eagerly His approach, while Lazarus paced up and down the hill-side in hopes of meeting Him by the way. And Jesus would come—wearied with His journey perhaps—exhausted with the work of long hours of preaching and teaching—and stricken at heart over the sorrows of the day. And as He rested His tired limbs, perhaps they would try to soothe Him with song; or, as they sat at the evening meal, perhaps He would read to them from that unwritten Book which lay spread all around, and their hearts

would burn within them, as, in these endearing hours of human friendship, they talked with Jesus.

We did not trouble ourselves to visit the reputed house of Lazarus. We were almost sorry we were tempted to descend the slippery steps of a vault leading to a small chamber said to be the tomb of Lazarus. But we were not sorry to hear read, as we walked along, John xi. ; and, reading it a short way off from the town, the eye could easily picture the scene, while the heart could realise the words and sympathies of that Blessed One who is still the Resurrection and the Life. Those tears were not merely shed because His friend was dead, but because sin had come into the world, and death by sin. They expressed His sympathy with the sorrow of the whole world ; and one of our party, who had recently stood beside the open grave of his dearest earthly treasure, felt comforted in listening to the heavenly voices, which spoke to his heart in the place where "Jesus wept."

We continued our ascent, and arrived at the summit of Olivet, again to enjoy that view which, in itself, is perhaps one of the grandest in all the world. There is a small chapel here, and we entered it. In the centre is a piece of rock, and on it an indentation which is said to be the footprint of our Saviour, left there on the occasion of His ascension into heaven from this spot. There is much dispute as to whether the *summit* of Olivet is the scene of the ascension. Scripture says, "He led His disciples out as far as to

Bethany, and was parted from them." (Luke xxiv. 50.) Bethany is on the Mount of Olives,—it might at one time have extended to this very spot. The angels said to the disciples (Acts i. 11), "Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," (and the Old Testament prophecy says, "His feet shall stand in that day on the Mount of Olives" (Zach. xiv. 4), not particularising Bethany); and, after this announcement, it is said they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, not particularising Bethany.

It is not a matter of grave moment, and certainly is not worth the angry discussions which there have been upon the subject. For my own part, I prefer the tradition which makes the summit of the Mount the scene of the ascension. It commanded the whole view of the city, of the Temple, of the scenes of His teaching, of His passion and His death, and, as He breathed His tender last farewell to the timorous band who were to start on their perilous career after that they were endued with power from on high, "beginning at Jerusalem," one naturally pictures the scene of the benediction in view of Jerusalem, and the outstretched hands of the Master as spread over that city and over all who should believe on His name in it.

As we stood around that stone we sang the well-known hymn, to Helmsley, the good old tune,

"Lo ! He comes with clouds descending.

We sang it uncovered—with a group of wondering Arabs around us—and as we sang, we listened to one

of the most beautiful musical effects we had ever heard. It was as though we had been joined by a heavenly choir, our voices being echoed, and re-echoed from the cupola beneath which we stood. It was an indescribable effect, and the memory of our little service of song will be a pleasant item in the memories of that long-to-be-remembered day.

We went to the top of the minaret adjoining the Mosque, and here we met with another party of friends. The balcony of the minaret is a narrow ledge, protected only with slabs of stone roughly stood on end and rivetted. There were too many of us on the tower at once, and as one of our friends was moving past to point out some object of interest, one of the stones forming the enclosure gave way and fell with a loud crash. Our friend had only time to cry, "Save me!" and to clutch hold of Frank and myself who happened to be at that spot, and although he seemed really over the ledge, and in the act of falling, he was happily saved. It was a very narrow escape though; and had he not clutched us both, and clutched firmly at that instant, he must inevitably have fallen, and as inevitably have been dashed to pieces, for beneath us was a stone wall, and beneath that a rocky descent almost as great as the fall from the minaret. My foot was planted against the parapet, and we saw that from the strain in saving him, it had loosened another of the large stones and partly drawn the rivet. Had it quite done so, and an inch more would have done it, all three would have gone over together.



Garden of Gethsemane.—*On Holy Ground*, p. 159.

We descended Olivet by the path which David went up on that bitter day when "he fled from Absalom, and went over the brook Kedron toward the way of the wilderness. And went up by the ascent of Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up" (2 Sam. xv. 23, 30.)

It brought us to the reputed Garden of Gethsemane, which is in the possession of the Latins, who, with horrible taste, have walled it in and planted it with flowers, and made a "show" of it. They exhibit the place of the agony as within a grotto or cave—so thoroughly opposed to the spirit of the story, and the open-air life of Christ. They point out the exact spot where the disciples slumbered, and where Judas gave his treacherous kiss. And, as they enter minutely into these details, we know that the Greeks have got a Gethsemane of their own, in opposition to this one, where the same precise spots will be pointed out with equal exactness. God save us from sectarianism, either in its broader distinctions or narrower squabbles, and God save us from thinking much of the visible and material, at the expense of the divine and spiritual.

The sight of those eight old olive trees, with their marvellous trunks, make us forget all minor things, and help us to think that after all this may be Gethsemane; and it is just possible that these may have been the very trees which sheltered Him. If so, it is

the most sacred spot on earth, as it is the grandest. Marathon and Waterloo commemorate great victories, but this a greater. It is the scene of the conquest of the world.

But grand as are the consequences of that mighty struggle, the remembrance of the event must always be sorrowful to the Christian. "He went forth with His disciples over the brook Kedron, where was a garden, into which he entered with His disciples" (John xviii. 1.)

Over there, by Jerusalem, His body was crucified; but this was the scene of the crucifixion of His soul. There, the letter of the Law was executed; but here the whole awful weight of its spirit was borne. There, He drank the dregs of sorrow; but here the full cup was wrung out to Him.

"Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

Here the enemy, who had departed from Him for a season, returned with all the powers of hell to overthrow the Son of Man. Here, His "own familiar friend" betrayed Him. Here, the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through suffering. And from this place, broken-hearted as he was, with the cross before Him, and a heavier cross upon Him, He rose up from that garden and went forth to die!

That evening, as I lay in my tent thinking over some of the hundred sermons of the day, there ran in my mind, as a tune will sometimes do, those words,

which seemed to gain new force as they gained more touching plaintiveness, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! if thou hadst known the things that belong unto thy peace—but now they are hidden from thine eyes!"

And in the night, as the wind swept through the valley of Hinnom, and the rain fell in torrents, I seemed to hear still the same mournful dirge, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!





IX.—IN THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

MORIAH—ZION.

IN attempting to give an account of a visit to the principal sights of this wonderful city, where, at every yard, is pointed out some traditional spot, and where every spot has been questioned, more or less, by learned controversialists, I feel great hesitation. But my visit was that of an ordinary tourist, bent upon seeing everything that was to be seen, and my work now is simply to describe what I saw. Further on will be found a list of works* which the student will find pleasure in consulting for an elaborate history of this most wonderful city in the world.

Just a brief outline of the History of Jerusalem, similar to that I have given of other places visited in the town, may come in perhaps acceptably here.

Jerusalem signifying foundation or habitation of peace, is referred to in Scripture, under a variety of names, amongst which are Salem, *peace*, the city of Melchizedek ; Jebus, the city of the Jebusites ; the city of David ; the Holy city ; city of Judah, &c.

The first incident on record, in connection with the

* See Chapter XVI.

city, is the visit of Abram, when Melchizedek, as priest of the Most High God, came forth to bless him. It was here probably that Abraham offered up his only son Isaac, on Mount Moriah, "*chosen of God.*" David came against the city with his army, when it was in the possession of the Jebusites, and "took the stronghold of Zion, the same is the city of David." (2 Sam. v. 7).

On "the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite" (2 Sam. xxiv. 16), the place where David had prayed for the plague to be stayed, the magnificent temple of Solomon was reared, and during his reign, all the wealth of the nations poured into the city, and it reached its highest state of prosperity. Mighty and marvellous were the architectural works of this period, and memorials remain to this day which confirm the accounts given to us in the Scriptures, and by Jewish historians, which seem almost fabulous. After Solomon's death, the glory waned, and the history of Jerusalem is a history of sieges, invasions, and plunders, varied by episodes of prosperity, in which fortifications were strengthened and waste places restored. This lasted for four hundred years, and then it was besieged by Nebuchadnezzar. The temple was destroyed, its treasures carried away, the walls overthrown, the city razed to the ground, and the Jews carried into captivity in Babylon.

But in the days of Nehemiah, the walls and the temple were rebuilt, and the city re-established.

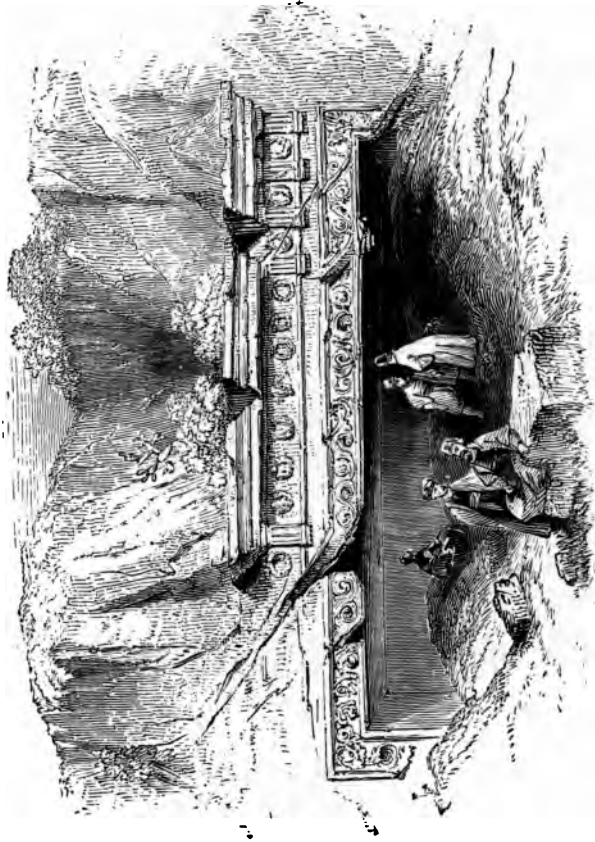
Then follows the history of siege and invasion again

until Herod was appointed King of Judea, by Rome. In his days, the greatest architectural works that Jerusalem had known since the time of Solomon, were commenced, and to Jerusalem, the city of Herod, Christ came. He gave the fearful prediction of its fall, and in A.D. 70, Titus besieged the city, and then came to pass the saying which the rejected King of the Jews had uttered, "not one stone shall be left upon another."

To tell how it subsequently became a Roman colony, and then a sacred city of the Mahommedans—how it was ruled by Arabs, Fatimites, and Crusaders—and how at last it fell into the hands of the Turks—would make a book—and the book has been made over and over again.

But we have to do with the Jerusalem of to-day, and the first thing that we look to, is the general aspect and position of the city. "What is Jerusalem like?" was a question put to me, over and over again upon my return.

Well, it is a mountain city, surrounded by mountains, or more strictly speaking, hills. It is a walled city, with five open gates and two closed, and has a remarkably imposing appearance, although the wall would be but a poor protection in modern warfare. It is built upon two hills, Zion and Moriah, the former being much higher than the latter. In olden times there were four hills, Zion, Acra, Moriah, and Bezetha; the Tyropæon, or Cheesemonger's Valley separating Zion and Acra from Moriah, but now the casual observer only marks two hills, Zion and Moriah.



Sepulchre of the Kings of Judea.— *On Holy Ground*, p. 164

The city is defended by deep valleys, in some places going sheer down from the walls. These are the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshaphat. On the north, there is no great depression, and those who think the present site of Jerusalem is not a theatre large enough for the mighty scenes which were enacted upon it, may extend it as far as they please in imagination, on this side of the city.

“The town itself covers an area of 209½ acres, of which 35 are occupied by the Harem esh Shereef. The remaining space is divided into different quarters; the Christian quarter, including the part occupied by the Armenians, taking up the western half; the Mahommedans have the north-east portion; the Jews the south-east. The whole population is now about 16,000. The circumference is very nearly two and a quarter miles, while the extent of the city—small as it is, it now seems too large for the population—may be illustrated by the fact that it would nearly occupy the space included between Oxford Street and Piccadilly on the north and south, and Park Lane and Bond Street on the east and west.”*

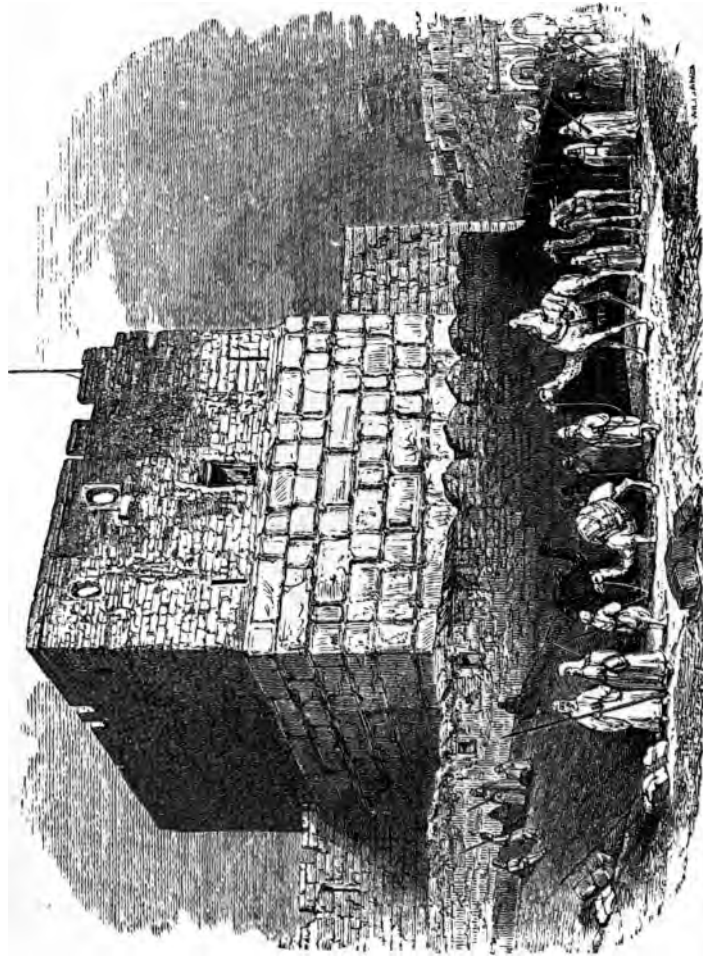
With these few introductory remarks, let us enter the city again by the Jaffa Gate (called by the Mahommedans Bab-el-Khalil, *i.e.*, Gate of the Friend), and commence our peregrinations, giving heed, by the way, to all the legends Christian, Jewish, and Mahommedan.

* “Our work in Palestine,” p. 28.

The first thing that strikes our attention is a massive square tower, of great antiquity. It is supposed to be the Tower of Hippicus, built by Herod. If it is the very tower, it was standing here in the days when our Saviour was a stranger in the city ; perhaps He rested under its shadow as those Arabs are doing. At all events, if it is the same building, and it seems probable it may be (Josephus says that Titus left the three towers, built by Herod, standing ; the two others were called Phasælis and Mariamne, and have been destroyed), it is one of the few buildings, perhaps the only one left, on which He gazed. But how can this be reconciled with the prophecy of our Saviour that not one stone should be left upon another that should not be thrown down ? The explanation is very simple. It was a strong figure of speech, similar to many employed by Him, and is not to be taken in its exact literal meaning.

In the space close by this tower, and on the very ground where the English Church, already referred to, stands, Herod's palace once stood.

Proceeding down the "Street of David," accompanied by the Cavasse of the Consul, who was arrayed like an Eastern beadle, and bore a long sword which got perpetually in his way, we came to the Temple ; and, after a few preliminaries, entered the Haram by the "Beautiful Gate." Only a few years ago, neither love nor money could procure admission to the Mosque of Omar or the Haram surrounding it, it was closed fast as Machpelah, and stories are told of dangerous



Tower of Hippicus — On He'y Ground, p. 166.



adventures by Europeans in the disguise of Arabs, who have attempted, and in some cases succeeded, in gaining admission. Happily the restrictions are every year growing less, and probably before long, all the Mosques will become accessible as the Moslems become better acquainted with English travellers, and the Backsheesh they are willing to give. It is rather curious, however, that the Mosque of Omar should be one of the first to be thrown open, for the Mahomedans have a tradition, that every prayer offered within it will be answered ; and it has been suggested, that as all good Christians will be disposed to pray for the downfall of false religion, it is bad policy to give them the opportunity.

The Haram is a vast platform, artificially built upon the rock of Mount Moriah. The enclosure is full of objects of interest—the greatest of which are the Mosques of Omar and El-Aksa. I shall point out the curiosities of the place in the order in which I saw them ; and, as everything, from the plane-trees which overshadow the buildings, to the vaults which support them, are subjects of controversy, the reader must form his own conclusions as to the authenticity of the legends attaching to them.

As we entered, we had the site of the Castle of Antonia,—which was once the fortress of the Temple, on our left hand, with a long row of cloisters leading towards it, on the top of which the Dervishes have their residence ; and opposite was the Court of the Gentiles. We take off our boots on the flight of steps

facing the so-called Gate of Israel, and put on the slippers which we have brought in our pockets, and are supposed not to have been defiled with the dust of the city. We are shewn first a small structure where the prophets once preached; then an elegant little dome standing over the spot where it is said Solomon offered that wonderful dedicatory prayer on the completion of the Temple. We next visit the praying place of St George! (of all people in the world!) and some stones, said to be remains of Solomon's Temple, bearing on them hieroglyphs, representing the stem of Jesse. Then we examine one of the most exquisite pieces of architecture in the whole Haram. It is called the Dome of the Chain, (*Cubbet es Silsileh*), or the Tribunal of David; and a legend says, that in days of yore a chain was suspended from heaven and stood over this spot, and when any two disputants could not agree, the chain would move towards the one who had the right on his side, and so the litigation would be settled. But the Jews took a mean advantage of the swinging of the chain in a rather tricky manner, so it was drawn up into heaven—or at all events disappeared, and has not been heard of since. It is said that this building, which has a beautiful cupola, supported by marble columns of different designs, is the model of the Dome of the Rock.

And now we have before us the Mosque of Omar, the Dome of the Rock, the Sakharah—next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the most deeply interesting building in Palestine.

It stands upon the summit of Moriah ; tradition says upon the very spot where Ornan had his threshing-floor, where Abraham offered up Isaac, where David interceded for the plague-stricken people, and where the Jewish Temple, the glory of Israel, stood. That man must be dead to all poetry and piety, who can stand before this magnificent building, with its many-coloured marbles glistening in the sunlight as once the "goodly stones of the Temple" shone before the eyes of the disciples, and not be moved with a strong emotion. One's thoughts rush away to the past, when psalmists wrote and patriots sung of the Temple glory. Hither the tribes came up ; here shone forth the light of the Shekinah ; here was the centre of the religious, the poetical, and the political life of God's chosen nation. And then one thinks of the defeats and disasters, consequent upon disobedience ; how glory after glory vanished, until alien powers desolated, and utterly destroyed it. One thinks of devout Jews in every land, oppressed and burdened, turning towards this sacred site still, and remembering it with tears, as they pray for their restoration to their land. Above all, one thinks of the little child presented here by His Virgin mother, of the Youth asking and answering questions, and of the Man-God teaching and preaching the things concerning Himself. These, and a hundred other drifting thoughts hurry through the mind, and perchance the eye fills with tears, and a prayer comes forth with a fervour which has never been known before, that the Lord

will stretch forth His hand and gather again the outcasts, and "destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all the nations." (Isa. xxv. 7, with 2 Cor. iii. 15).

The building has eight sides, each side is sixty-seven feet long, and each side has seven windows. At first sight it looks like a building of Dutch tiles, in which blue prevails; but on closer inspection it is found that these coloured tiles form part of very elaborate ornamentation. All the walls are covered with inscriptions in Arabic.

As we entered the mosque, the first thing we saw was darkness; coming in from the exceedingly bright sunshine, it was some moments before our eyes grew accustomed to the dull and dark mosque. By degrees we were able to make out objects, and at length every thing grew perfectly distinct.

"The interior has two cloisters, separated by an octagonal course of piers and columns, within this again another circle of four great piers and twelve Corinthian columns which support the great dome." The fifty-six stained glass windows are of great beauty, they do not represent scenes or figures, but are simply Mosaics in glass of curious patterns which might have been caught by the aid of a good kaleidoscope.

We had no mind to go into the details of architecture, nor to listen to the rubbish a guide was talking, who pointed out certain columns, declaring

that *this* was taken from Solomon's Temple, and *that* from Herod's. There was one thing we wished to see, compared with which all else was uninteresting. That was the Sacred Rock, immediately beneath the dome, from whence the building takes its name. It is a bare, rugged, unhewn piece of rock, "about 60 feet long and 50 broad, standing 4 feet 9½ inches above the marble pavement at its highest point." Was it really here that the grand type of our Saviour's death was enacted in the person of Isaac? Was it really here that in the days of the glorious Temple the priests offered their sacrifices? Is that circular hole really the place through which the blood of the sacrifices poured, and was carried by way of the Brook Kedron outside the city? Some day, perhaps, these questions will be set at rest satisfactorily to all; at present they are not, and in the meantime it is pleasant to cling to a possibility.

How short a step it is from the sublime to the ridiculous! I must introduce two little incidents, offering my apology at the same time if it is needed. As we approached the rock, which is railed off by a low palisade or screen about three feet high, a tourist (the very man who was surprised to hear that our Saviour was baptised in Jordan) broke out into the heathenish exclamation, "By Jove, it's a circus!!" All who heard it smiled, save one clerical, groaning under a small library of evidence for and against the rock, who remarked that an educational test should be applied to all who travelled in Palestine.

An American, who gazed upon the sacred rock for some time as if in deep devotional thought, smote his hands in a characteristic manner upon his pockets, and said, "I guess that rock has been a blessin' to the publishers!"

The Mahommedan legend of the rock is too well known to need telling again in detail; suffice it that when Mahomet ascended to heaven (if ever he did!) the rock wanted to follow him and actually commenced the ascent, but the angel Gabriel very promptly opposed the movement by holding it back with his hands, might and main, and the impression made by his fingers may be seen to this day, and will give the believing some idea of the magnitude of his work (and his fingers). But the most curious part of the legend is that the rock, having ascended some little distance, remained suspended miraculously in the air. Many pious Mussulmans came, it is said, to see it, but some of them were so terribly frightened lest the miracle should suddenly cease and the rock fall on them and crush them, that a wall was built up to it, and so it remains to this day. If you tap this wall you hear a hollow sound, and to those who have faith (and to none else) this is sufficient confirmation of the truth of the legend.

We saw the shield of Mahomet's uncle, and the impress of Mahomet's foot made on a stone, when he was mounting Borak for his heavenly journey. This is a great rendezvous for devout Muslems, who leave at this place little bits of their garments, or hairs from

their heads, for it is said Mahomet comes here every night, and knows by these signs who have called upon him. It is like leaving your card when your friend is not at home. But what a contrast to the Christian idea of worship. The Christian always finds his Lord "at home" in His house of prayer.

We went into the cave beneath the rock. It is covered with plaster, which entirely prevents the rock from being seen, but we noticed the large hole through which the blood of the sacrifices might have passed. There is, however, one thought and one feeling which fills the mind in this place, and outweighs all others in interest. What if Mr Fergusson's theory should be true, that this is none other than the very tomb in which the crucified body of our Saviour lay? What if this were the place where the angels sat, and these steps were those which Peter and John had trodden as they entered into the sepulchre? But there was no time to think about it then, and there is no room here to go into the pro's and con's of the case, so those who wish to know the arguments are referred to the learned works of Fergusson, Williams, and Robinson, or if these are not come-at-able, to an admirable paper in Smith's Dictionary of the Bible.

In the marble floor of this cave there is a slab which covers a remarkable spot. By those who go in for the theory that this is the very site of the temple, and that the hole in the rock is where the blood flowed through, this slab is said to cover the

aqueduct by which it was conveyed to the Kedron. By the Mahommedans it is called the Well of Spirits. Every Mahommedan wears a tuft of hair on the top of his head ; when he dies, his spirit goes down this well, and when the time comes for him to go to heaven, Mahomet will come and haul him out of this well by his tuft ! Thank God, that in our religion there is nothing which can rudely shock the mind of the most thoughtful or sensitive ; unhappily this is only one of a hundred monstrous fables associated with the holy places of the Haram.

It would weary you to tell of a certain place where, if an insane person ties a string to a small pedestal, he regains his reason ; or of the place where a man sits beside three nails driven into the marble floor and demands backsheesh ; for when these three nails, the last of many, shall have worked through the floor (and nothing but backsheesh will make them !) then the end of the world shall come !

Just one word more about the Mosque of Omar. As we came up from the cave, and walked once more round that rock, I was greatly struck with two things. First, that such a magnificent building, with such costly decorations, should have, as its grand attraction, that rude, rough piece of unhewn rock. There is, I believe, no other exhibition in the world like it, and I know of none so grand in its simplicity. The Greek and Roman Churches might take a useful lesson from it. If the rock had belonged to them instead of to the Mahommedans, they would have gilded it all

over, and stuck no end of candles over it, and have garlanded it round with ribbons and laces, and other tawdry fooleries, as they have the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. And the next thing that made a great impression on my mind was the soft and tender beauty of the light, now that my eyes had become thoroughly accustomed to it. The windows are superb; and the drapery, the arches, the ornaments, the many coloured marbles, all combine in one harmonious beauty of light and colour.

And now we leave the "Dome of the Rock," to visit the Mosque el Aksa, still within the Haram. On our way we come to a marble fountain, and beneath it we are told is a large reservoir, which was formerly supplied from Solomon's pools. Two of our party having scientific instruments immediately produced them, and reported that the pools are exactly one hundred feet higher than this fountain, and are at a distance of two-and-a-half hours—probably seven or eight English miles.

The Mosque el Aksa stands in the south-west of the Haram. It was once a Christian church, and was (probably) built by Justinian in the sixth century, but it fell into the possession of the Arabs, by whom it was altered and partially rebuilt. In the time of the Crusades it again became a Christian church, and part of it belonged to one of the three military orders which sprung up during the wars between the Chris-

tians and the Mahommedans. As we may have to refer to these three orders again, it may be well to particularise them here. I. The Knights of St John, who had their quarters in a hospital in Jerusalem dedicated to St John the Baptist—(subsequently they went to Cyprus, then to Rhodes, and finally to Malta). II. The Knights Templars, who had their quarters in this part of the Temple Haram, now called the Mosque el Aksa. III. The Teutonic Knights of St Mary of Jerusalem. Their duties were various—to bother the Mahommedans, to protect the pilgrims, to succour the sick and destitute, and to guard the highways, which were infested with robbers. Frank and Edwin, being young, felt immense pleasure in visiting the home of the Knights Templars, for had they not read, as we all did in our young days, a dozen books about the poetry, chivalry, and romance of those daring deeds which the gallant knights performed?

The Mosque is an immense building, and "has the form of a basilica of seven aisles. It is two hundred and seventy-two feet long by one hundred and eighty-four wide, over all, thus covering about fifty thousand square feet, or as much space as many of our great cathedrals." There are many traditions and legends connected with this place, but they would not interest the general reader. The tombs of the sons of Aaron are in this building, and the Mihrâb—or praying niche, of Moses, of John, and of Zachariah. There is also a cistern, called the Well of the Leaf, around which hangs a curious legend. It is said that Mahomet

delivered a prophecy that one of his followers should enter paradise while yet alive. During the caliphate of Omar, a worshipper, one Sherfík ibn Haiyán by name, came to this well to draw water, when his bucket slipped from his hands and fell in. He went down after it, and to his infinite surprise came to a door which he thrust open, and found it led into a magnificent garden. He wandered about for some time and then returned, but not until he had plucked a leaf which he brought with him for a token. The leaf never withered, and the words of the prophet were literally fulfilled, but the door has never since been found. It is still called the Well of the Leaf, and the devout Mussulman looks upon it as one of the entrances into paradise. An old proverb says, "Truth *lies* at the bottom of a well!" We regaled ourselves with a draught of water, which is pure and bright.

In the mosque there is a wooden pulpit, with marvellous carved work wrought at Damascus,—a stone from the Mount of Olives bearing the impress of our Saviour's foot (the other being on the mount, as already stated),—some pillars recently set up, having on their capitals the cherubic emblems, and at their base lilies and pomegranates, said to be remains of Solomon's temple, and a variety of other curiosities.

There are two places connected with El Aksa which have an interest to Mahommedans, and a painful interest to Christians who are shocked with

the childish absurdity of the legends attaching to them. One is within the mosque, and is part of the building, namely, two pillars standing rather closely together, so close that only very thin persons can pass between them. But every pilgrim is supposed to try, and those who succeed are regarded as the good and faithful, while those who, after fruitlessly striving, are unable to pass, are looked upon as evil and false. The other place is outside the mosque, where, in one of the pillars is set a stone; this the pilgrim kisses, and "takes a sight" at a black stone set in the wall across the colonnade. Then, blind-folded and with finger outstretched, he passes towards it; if his finger touches the stone it is a sign that he is safe for Paradise, but if he misses, then Paradise is closed to him. And this is the place where the Mahommedans finish their pilgrimage. What a miserable idea it is, what trifling with a subject which ought to be sacred to every man as man, apart from creed. To those who regard these things "in faith" what a blank disappointment, and hopeless, cheerless feeling it must bring to finish their toilsome pilgrimage with these games of chance; and to those who disregard the legends, what a deadening and hardening influence such frivolities must have when established in the place set apart for worship.

We next explored the excavations of the Palestine Exploration Society, viewing first the ancient wall of Ophel. It was discovered by Captain Warren, and is likely to prove of great importance, as it will aid

materially in determining the controversies now pending as to the actual site and extent of the Temple. Then we descended to the vaults under the Haram, visiting the small Mosque, where is exhibited a large stone sarcophagus called the "cradle of Jesus," notwithstanding the fact that Rome claims the honour of having the *real* cradle. One of the guides, probably to interest us, was pleased to say that this little mosque was also the place where Simeon took up the child Jesus in his arms and blessed Him, and also the room where Joseph and Mary found Him with the Doctors asking and answering questions.

Through a door from this room, only recently open to tourists, we passed into the celebrated and much debated vaults of the Haram, commonly called Solomon's Stables. There were few sights we saw in Jerusalem more impressive than these vaults. Captain Warren has worked through the *debris* and rubbish of ages, and has brought to light the wonderful substructures of the Temple area. They are vaulted avenues supported by immense pillars of "massive stones placed singly one above the other." There may be twenty of these avenues exposed, and each avenue may have a dozen or fifteen of these mammoth pillars which support the whole (I did not count them). The sight of these mighty works took us back in thought to that old Jerusalem, and those days of splendour of which so few traces are now left. The original Temple, doubtless, had piers and

arches similar to these, and some contend that they are the veritable works of those times. But the general opinion is that these are the works of Arab and that in the times of the Crusades they were used as stables; there are holes in the pillars still remaining to which the horses were probably tied.

Let those who are learned investigate and detail the story; it may be found in full in the work published under the auspices of the Exploration Committee. Whether Solomon's or Crusaders'—and probably both, for with the more recent work there are traces of work very ancient, one cannot help being impressed with the grand idea of extending the platform on which the Temple was built in such magnificent style, and asking the question, if these vaults are grand in their way what must have been the splendour of the superstructure?

Emerging above ground again we walked to the eastern wall of the Haram to see the window of judgment. I pass hurriedly in my account from sacred to profane, from Christian to Muslem, from fact to fable, and I do so to give the reader an opportunity of following the tourist pilgrim through Jerusalem as it is, and to help him to form an idea of the vexation of spirit which has to be endured and the jumble and confusion of thought which is experienced by those who would visit the holy places.

It is at the window of judgment that Mahommed will sit at the last day, all generation of Mussulmans being gathered before him. At this place is the



Tombs in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.—*On Holy Ground*, p. 181.

shaft of a column built horizontally into the wall, and looking at a little distance not unlike a cannon. This is the first pier of the great bridge Es Sir'ab which is to be thrown over the gulf of hell, and which all who would reach Paradise must cross. But it will be a fearful passage, for it is only a thin column at the starting place, and as it lengthens it will become as fine as a hair! Nor is this all, for each one will have to carry the burden of his sins as fetters. The guilty will fall into the gulf, but the faithful will be supported by angels, and the further they go along the bridge the lighter will be their burdens, till at length they will fly in safety to their heaven.

The view from this wall is very striking, and looking down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, which is one mass of graves with myriads of memorial stones, the dead of all generations filling up the valley which once was very deep—one cannot help a feeling of sympathy with Jew and Muslem, who have agreed that this will be the scene of the final judgment. The Messiah will come to the Mount of Olives—so read the Jews—and then will be accomplished the prophecy of Joel iii. 2. "I will gather all nations and will bring them into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations and parted my land." On the strength of the tradition, arising from a literal translation of a figurative name (for Jehoshaphat signifies "Jehovah judgeth," or "Jehovah is the judge"),

many a pious Jew has come to Jerusalem on purpose to be buried here, and there are not a few in the city at this very day who are awaiting their appointed time until their change come, and will count it joy to be buried in the place where they imagine the Messiah (as the Muslems imagine Mahommed), "will sit to judge all the heathen," v. 12.

From here, we went to see the "Golden Gate." It is one of the closed gates, and can only be entered from within the Haram. A tradition affirms that our Saviour entered into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday through this gate, and that when He comes to earth a second time, it will be through this gate that He and His will enter Jerusalem in triumph. The Mussulmans have, therefore, prudently shut it up and walled it in. Leaving the more learned of our party to discuss whether Mr Fergusson was right, in saying, that this gateway was of a date not later than the time of Constantine, we took just a hasty glance at the holes for the portcullis, and other traces which are said to refer to a remote antiquity, including two monolith pillars presented by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon (!)—and then strolled again into the Haram. It was very pleasant to walk about in that large grass grown space, and to gaze again and again on the rich colouring and graceful form of the "Dome of the rock," and to take breath a little while after sight-seeing and sit down to think. But this would probably have been a difficulty, had not a theme for thought been brought conspicuously before us. As we

sat, a funeral procession came by ; the mourners were wailing their low whining cry of grief, the body was borne on the heads of three men, the head of the coffin having a raised piece of wood about two feet high, around which the garments of the deceased were hung, and on the top, his turban and fez were fixed. It was a Mahommedan funeral, and our guide informed us that all funerals pass through the Haram wherever the place of interment may be. Who could see that procession, crossing the very platform where He once preached, who brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, unmoved ? And who could withhold the cry, How long, O Lord ! how long ?

It may have struck some in reading the account of the curiosities exhibited in the Mosque of Omar and adjacent buildings, how many things there are possessed by the Mahommedans which are *Christian*—the impress of Christ's foot, His cradle, &c., &c. Is this a good sign or a bad ? The answer may be found in these other questions :—Can light dwell with darkness ? What concord hath Christ with Belial ? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols ? Mahommedanism may imagine it can weld together all the creeds in its own fanatical superstition, but between it and Christianity, at least, there is a great gulf fixed which no human invention can span.

Passing over many places, which space will not allow for even mentioning—we left the Temple and came to the Jews' wailing-place, under the western wall of the Haram. The wall is very ancient, and at

the wailing-place there are five courses of bevelled stones, which, beyond all doubt, were once belonging to the Temple of Herod, and probably date back to the time of Solomon. And this is the Jews' only heritage in his own city; he dare not cross the Haram on pain of death; he is only on sufferance in the city; and the one place he can call his own, is this little narrow court underneath the wall. Every Friday, they muster here in considerable numbers, and every day some may be seen. I was glad it was not Friday when I visited the place, for then we should have seen one of the "shows" of Jerusalem, and such a ceremony performed as a mere heartless form, as it sometimes is, would have been a very melancholy thing to see. But on this Monday all was quiet; two daughters of Zion were weeping there, and drew their large white bernousés over their heads as we approached, and shortly afterwards withdrew. And there was one grand old Jew, a typical specimen of his race, with a white beard and bent shoulders, standing with his head resting against the wall. He held a Bible in his hand, from which he sometimes read, and then lifting up his eyes to the wall he stretched out his hands, and murmured something which we could not understand, but might easily interpret into sentences like this:—

"Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house where our fathers praised Thee is burned up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste! O God! the heathen are come

into Thine inheritance, Thy Holy Temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps. How long, Lord! wilt Thou be angry for ever?" Poor old man! he looked like a devout Jew who had come to the holy city to finish his days, and to rest with his kindred in the valley of Jehoshaphat. There was a dignity and a grandeur about him, and as he turned away from this sacred spot to make way for sight-seeing Christians, there was in his look such profound sorrow mingled with a glance of scorn at the intruders, that had I been a painter I would have given a Jew's ransom to have transferred to canvas. I think there could be no better spot for an artist to choose than the Jews' wailing place for studies in physiognomy; and I am sure there could not be a better place for those who love to pray that the time to favour Zion may soon come when her children shall return as the ransomed of the Lord, than here.

The joints of the lower courses of stones have many holes and chinks in them, and these are made the repositories of many curious tokens left by the mourners. In some were little balls of hair plucked from the head or the beard by devout worshippers in the frenzy of their sorrow, and placed here "as a testimony." I found a small parcel in one chink which contained a little earth and a lock of hair. A resident in Jerusalem informed me that often when a son of Abraham comes up to this city on pilgrimage he brings with him some memorial like this from his father's grave in some alien land, and leaves it in

these sacred stones, as a memento. Sometimes letters are written calling upon the Psalmists and Prophets to hear their prayers (how sorrowful hearts cling to the idea of a Mediator!) and sometimes written prayers are hidden here. A friend of mine—a Vandal—took out one of these prayers and had it translated. It is as follows :—

"The place is Calshe, widow Passey Gittal, the daughter of Kezieh Sarah, prays for health, good living, and prosperity; that the fabric of Talithin that she makes shall be so prosperous as to enable her to pay her husband's debts. Her daughter, the betrothed Deborah Nachama—oh! that she be a good companion. Her daughter, the virgin Tobia Rebekah to educate her to every good action. Her deaf son Moses Jacob, that he shall be healed through the mercy of the Lord, and by the privilege and virtues of the righteous man that he may begin to hear and to speak aright, and that he may be brought up to every good thing. Her son Isaac to bring him up to prosperity, and to complete healing of his body. Her daughter Esther Entah to bring her up to prosperity, that we may all be delivered from all the evil, and that they may be privileged to every good action, that they may be spared from all epidemics and sicknesses that are going round the world, to all good things." *

* Hebrew Prayer taken out of a hole in the wall of the Mosque that covers the tomb of Abraham at Hebron, March 17, 1872. Translated by Mr Shpira, at Jerusalem.

Of course we visited the arch discovered by the American traveller Robinson, and named, after him, Robinson's arch. It leads nowhere now, but it bridges over a great deal that was once looked upon as discrepancy in the writings of Josephus. The arch once spanned the Tyropœon Valley, connecting Moriah with Zion. Only the spring of it is now to be seen, the stones of which measure from twenty to twenty-four feet each in length. "The distance to the hill side of Zion is 350 feet, and that must have been the length of the ancient bridge." All that Robinson conjectured about this, Captain Warren has been able to prove, and a mass of most important information has been brought to light by the excavations here.

"The excavations disclosed, at a distance of sixty feet under the present surface of the soil, fragments of voussoirs, or bevelled stones, lying where they fell, when, by some means or other unknown, the bridge was destroyed. The place on which they now lie scattered in confusion once formed the level of a street running under the arch, like the street in Edinburgh under the North Bridge, or that in London under the New Holborn Viaduct. The excavations also laid open a vast conduit running under this ancient street, at a further depth of twenty feet; and, what is very remarkable, brought to light an opening into it, through which, in all probability, water was once drawn from the conduit as from a well. Through this opening water would be obtained when

the bridge was perfect, when people passed under it to and fro in the days of Herod; for it must have existed then, if not before. Antiquaries are apt to give as ancient a date as possible to the remains they examine and describe, and one writer observes: "Imagination has to stop at the date of Solomon as the time when the Temple, the Haram-wall, and the bridge were built, but this cistern may have existed before that time. Scandals whispered by the mouth of this well may have echoed round its rocky sides as far back as the time when the Jebusites and Canaanites ruled in the land." For my own part, I am quite satisfied to confine my imagination respecting such a well in one of the streets of Jerusalem to the era of the Herodian Temple; to the days when our blessed Lord and His apostles might have drunk of its waters; when their shadows might have fallen on the pavements, or their forms have been watched passing under the great arch by the people looking down from the parapet above."*

Near to this spot, and only a few rods north of the wailing place is "Wilson's Arch." With reference to the excavations made here, an interesting passage occurs in "Our Work in Palestine," which I quote:

"Under Wilson's Arch is an old disused cistern, the pavement of which was broken through and a shaft sunk along the wall. The stones here were about 3 feet 8 inches to 4 feet in height. They

* From papers on "The Holy City," by Rev. John Stoughton, D.D.

were all in their original positions, and appeared to Captain Warren to be probably one of the *oldest portions of the Sanctuary now existing*. If so, they formed, without doubt, part of the original enclosure wall of the Temple. At a depth of 24 feet they came upon a mass of masonry and voussiors, apparently those of a fallen arch. Hence we may conclude that the present arch, which is Herodian, stands upon the site of an older one. Lower down they came to the foundations of the wall in the rock, and here running water was found; and observations, extending over a long period, proved that a fountain of water exists in the city, and is running to this day far below the surface. It ran along the wall, but no trace of the stream was found lower down at the excavations near Robinson's arch. There is a tradition among the Jews that when flowing water has been discovered three times under the Temple walls, the Messiah is at hand. Now, according to their accounts, it had been found twice before, so that this made the third time, and the Rabbis came down to look at the discovery with cries of joy and thanksgiving.*

Very much depends upon this discovery in determining the sites of the ancient city, but at present it has not been ascertained where the stream comes from or whither it goes.

We ascended Mount Zion, and from a rocky ledge

* P. 104.

here we obtained a fine view of En Rogel, the Field of Blood, and the village and pool of Siloam, while around us we had the fulfilment of the prophecy, "Zion shall be ploughed as a field." (Jer. xxvi. 18).

On Mount Zion there are a hundred sacred places, and one loves to linger there and think of the greatness of former days, when it was crowned with stately palaces, and for a thousand years the kings of Israel lived here and reigned over the land. It was here that David conquered the original inhabitants, and "took the stronghold of Zion: the same is the city of David." And it was here that the Jews held out to the last when the city was taken by Titus. Those who have not read the story will be repaid by listening to the thrilling tale as told by Dean Milman, in "The History of the Jews."

There was one sight on Mount Zion which was full of painful interest, and will not be easily forgotten. It was a leper village—just within the gate of the city—a few miserable huts in a small court which has no outlet, and separate from any other building. All around is dirt, and rubbish, and desolation. As we approached, thirteen of the unhappy denizens of this living tomb crawled out to the roadside, and there, kneeling or squatting, for they are not permitted to come near to the passer-by, they lifted up their voices in one piteous wail, and solicited alms. What a commentary this was upon the gospel story. One almost turned to see if the Good Physician was not

drawing nigh, for once "there came a leper to Him, *beseeking* Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and said, I will, be thou clean; and as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed." (Mark i. 40-42). O! the love of that man of sorrows, who Himself bore our sicknesses! He *touched* him, not with a touch that feared contamination, or that made the distance seem the greater from its shuddering coldness, but with the generous unselfish touch of the One whose Divine heart was "moved with compassion."

The awful spectacle presented by those poor creatures, cut off from all association with the outside world, and waiting for death, which seemed so tardy in coming, was pitiable to the last degree. They were literally falling to pieces with disease, limb after limb becoming shapeless, or altogether lost. Some of their faces were knotted or covered with abscesses, which rendered the features hardly discernible. Some parts of the old law still remain in force with regard to the leper. "All the days wherein the plague remaineth in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean, he shall dwell alone; without the camp shall his habitation be." (Lev. xiii. 46.)

It appears that there are several kinds of leprosy, but that it is beyond the reach of medical science to determine its origin or to effect its cure; and, although

the existing forms of the disease have not been proved to be contagious, there is a universal avoidance of the leper, who is compelled to dwell alone, or with others suffering from the same malady.⁶ It still makes its appearance as it did in the days of Moses—first by the development of a pimple or a scab, and it continues and increases until limb after limb, and power after power is affected, and the victim of this direful calamity is beyond the reach of help unless through the direct interposition of the Almighty. Surely there is not in all the Scriptures a more striking type of the progress and power of sin; nor do we see in any of the miracles the loving work of the Saviour from sin more strikingly exemplified than in His treatment of the lepers.

Our guides made a collection amongst us on behalf of the poor creatures, and they received it, I doubt not, with pleasure; but so fearfully were their faces disfigured, that there was no ability left in them to express the smile of joy. I may mention here that I once visited the Lepers' Hospital at Bergen in Norway, but I saw nothing there corresponding with the appearance of the disease here. In Norway the disease is popularly ascribed to poor living, and an excessive quantity of fish diet. Throughout Syria, wherever we met lepers (and there were many in Samaria and at Damascus), we observed that they all had the same melancholy wail in soliciting alms, unlike any human cry I have ever heard before. I am told that this is a peculiarity of the disease itself, leprosy

almost invariably attacking the throat, and utterly destroying the roof of the mouth.

Among the places of real and legendary interest on Mount Zion may be mentioned the Palace of Caiaphas, around which cluster a group of clumsy fables which might as easily produce contempt in the minds of Mahommedans as their legends do in ours. One sighs to think of the prurient curiosities which those who have taken the Christian name have had the effrontery to originate. Remembering that the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus so utterly that the very sites of many of its most important public edifices have been completely lost, does it not strike you as childish nonsense to be told that this is the prison in which our Saviour was incarcerated during the intervals of His trial; that this is the stone which was rolled away from the sepulchre, that this is the place where the thorn grew of which His crown was composed, and this bit of a column is where the cock stood and crew when Peter denied his Lord!!

Passing by these with a feeling of sadness, we come to a place of real interest. It is the Cœnaculum, the scene of the Last Supper; the *upper chamber* of such sacred memory. The lower chamber is the reputed sepulchre of David. Learned travellers have placed the tomb of the patriarch in half a dozen different places within and without the city, one on the Mount of Olives, another on Moriah, and others elsewhere. Scripture, however, distinctly states that he was buried in the city of David, which is Mount Zion, and it is

evident that the place was known in the times of the apostles, for Peter, in his pentecostal speech, said, "Men and brethren, let me speak to you freely of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day." (Acts ii. 19.) But nothing more is heard of it till the twelfth century, when it was visited by Benjamin of Tudela, who gives this legend :—

"Fifteen years ago one of the walls of the place of worship on Mount Zion fell down, which the patriarch ordered the priest to repair. He commanded to take stones from the original wall of Zion, and to employ them for that purpose ; which command was obeyed. Two labourers, who were engaged in digging stones from the very foundation of the walls of Zion, happened to meet with one which formed the mouth of a cavern. They agreed to enter the cave, and to search for treasure ; and in pursuit of this object they penetrated to a large hall, supported by pillars of marble, encrusted with gold and silver, before which stood a table, with a golden sceptre and crown. This was the sepulchre of David, King of Israel, to the left of which they saw that of Solomon, and of all the kings of Judah who were buried there. They further saw locked chests, and desired to enter the hall to examine them, but a blast of wind like a storm issued forth from the mouth of the cavern, and prostrated them almost lifeless on the ground. They lay in this state until evening, when they heard a voice commanding them to rise and go forth from the place. They pro-



Lower Pool of Gihon, near the Tomb of David.—*On Ho'y Ground*, p. 194



ceeded, terror-stricken, to the patriarch, and informed him of what had occurred. He summoned Rabbi Abraham el Constantine, a pious ascetic, one of the mourners of the downfall of Jerusalem, and caused the two labourers to repeat the occurrence in his presence. Rabbi Abraham hereupon informed the patriarch that they had discovered the sepulchres of the house of David, and of the kings of Judah. The patriarch ordered the place to be walled up, so as to hide it effectually from every one to the present day."

That is one version of the story, and here is another: "The so-called tomb of David was originally a convent of Franciscan monks, who believed it to be the site of the Cœnaculum, and their traditions mention nothing of an underground cavern such as is now said by the Mahommedans to exist. The tradition which makes it the tomb of David is purely Muslem in its origin, and does not date back earlier than the time of El Melik ed Dháher Chakmak (1448). Oral tradition in Jerusalem says that a beggar came one day to the door of the monastery asking for relief, and in revenge for being refused, went about declaring it was the tomb of David, in order to excite the Moslem fanatics to seize upon and confiscate the spot. His plan succeeded."*

Be this as it may, nothing can yet be pronounced definitely upon the subject. Several distinguished

* "Jerusalem, the City of Herod and Saladin," p. 436.

travellers have been permitted to look in at the doorway of the tomb, and speak of an immense sarcophagus contained therein; but no really scientific exploration has been made there. No doubt as fresh privileges are granted to travellers the truth will be brought to light. In the meantime, I was quite content to regard this as the sepulchre of David until it should be positively proved not to be.

And now as to the Cœnaculum. It is stated that when Titus destroyed Jerusalem, this building, with a few others near it, escaped; and that the earliest travellers to the land found it identified as the scene of the Last Supper, and each seemed to have added further traditions to those already clustered

in many languages, the burden of them being on this wise—"Shalum begs the prayers of David for her soul."

We brought our first tour of inspection to a close at this point.





X.—IN THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING.

THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—THE ENVIRONS.

PURSUING the plan adopted in the last chapter of describing the places in the order in which they were visited, let us start out again for a journey in Jerusalem and its environs.

Near to the Jaffa Gate, and outside the city, are the buildings—referred to in a former chapter—known as the New Russian Quarter. Very gaunt and ugly many of the buildings look to the ordinary observer, but doubtless they have a beauty of their own to the poor Russian pilgrims who flock to the holy city by thousands in the course of the year, and find in the convent and neighbouring establishments food, and rest, and shelter, and sometimes the wherewithal to help them on their road homewards. We noticed in the grounds of the Russian hospice a huge monolith pillar, “wrought” on one side only, probably intended for some great structure on the Hill of Zion—perhaps for David’s house—perhaps for Herod’s palace. It has only recently been brought to light, and every fresh discovery is sure to bring its crowd of theorists,

for every stone of Old Jerusalem holds its secrets, and the learned are daily examining and cross-examining these silent witnesses of the past. It is by a stone here, a broken shaft there, a column, a capital, or even a tear-bottle, that piece by piece the chain of evidence determining the sites of sacred places is being wrought.

In the gardens of the convent, locust, almond, and castor-oil trees abound, and marigolds are everywhere.

A walk across fields studded with olive trees, some of great age, brought us to the grotto of Jeremiah—which has nothing very remarkable about it—and nearly opposite to it we came to the Damascus Gate. It is a fine old gate, and here one sees part of the solid rock, which once may have formed a portion of the original wall of the city. At this point an unexpected journey was proposed to us. We had walked through the streets of Jerusalem, and had been assured over and over again that the city of our Lord was from 20 to 50 feet beneath the stones we trod, while the city of Nehemiah lay lower, and the city of Solomon lower still. Now we were to make a journey *underneath* the city, through mighty caverns excavated in the solid rock, and to have the cities of the past over our heads!

We had to stoop low to enter a hole near the gate, and then our guides gave each of us a candle, and scrambling in we found ourselves in a few minutes in a vast cave. At first we could not make out much,

for the light of our tapers, mingling with the one long shaft of light which came in through the opening, made a curious effect for the eyes. Walking along in procession we soon lost the last streak of daylight, and then we began to realise the strangeness of the situation! Rock above, below, around; dismal archways leading into darkness, and seeming to have no end; on we went, through a mighty cavern here, or a gloomy vault there, until we had walked forward for half an hour. It was a journey to be remembered; but the trivial often comes foremost in many things which are notable, and it did in this instance, for we were pleased with the novelty of our procession of forty odd tourists groping along, each bearing a candle on high, or sometimes bringing them all together so as to throw a flood of light down some dismal avenue; and amused at seeing the strange effect of some solitary explorer wending his way in the distance till his faint light grew fainter, and at last died away in the darkness! But there was a strange feeling of awe in walking through those subterranean caverns, for there in the rock we could make out the marks of chisellings, just as they were left centuries and centuries ago; there was the hole where once a spring of water trickled, and at which the weary workmen slaked their thirst, and there were large blocks partially cut from the rocks, and pillars partially shaped and left unfinished. And for ages and ages the darkness and silence have dwelt together in these dreary caverns, while overhead in the city generations have

come and gone, its streets have been deluged with blood, and its glories have been levelled with the dust. And here silence and darkness dwelt when the cry of "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" rang through the busy streets; and, perhaps, a shudder ran through these gloomy regions when the cry went forth, "It is finished," and a great earthquake shook the solid earth while darkness enfolded the land.

But what were these caverns for? Are they natural, or are they the work of men's hands. Undoubtedly the latter; and from these quarries came the huge stones which formed the Temple and the great buildings of the ancient city. "The house when it was in building was built of stone, made ready before it was brought hither, so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was building" (1 Kings, vi. 7).

We walked in these vaults for nearly an hour, and it seemed that we might have gone on for ever (probably we should if our stock of candles had been exhausted, or if we had ventured without guides). It is not certain how far these quarries extend, as probably many of the avenues are blocked up with *debris*; but for six hundred yards, in a south-easterly direction, the way is open. As we came back again to the opening through which we entered, it was as trying to the eyes to gaze steadfastly at the light pouring through the hole as to gaze on the sun.

And now, entering the city by the Damascus Gate,

with the Christian quarter on our right, and the Mahomedan quarter on our left, we proceed along "the Street of the Gate of the Column," take the first wide turning to the right, which is "the Street of the Palace," and arrive in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Let not the reader imagine that I am about to enter into the controversies as to whether this really is the actual sepulchre. While I was in Jerusalem my faith would never allow me to go beyond, "*If* this be the place;" and, of course, I tried every argument to convince my better judgment that it was. But I did not succeed, and my impression to this moment is, that the great church, which has had such a marvellous history, and has gathered round it all the creeds of Christendom; for which rivers of blood have been spilt and enormous wrath lavished, never could have contained the sepulchre of our Lord.

I know how rash it is to express an opinion in this matter, especially at the present time, when excavations are in progress which may throw much light upon the subject. The question lies in a nutshell. The Holy Sepulchre stands now in the heart of the city, far within the present walls. Could the site ever have been *outside* the walls? If it was, it might by a bare possibility be the actual sepulchre; and if not, then the whole thing is an invention.

I suppose every Christian has in his mind's-eye an indelible picture of the true Calvary and the true Sepulchre. And those sacred associations of thought

and place are more real and more true than the traditional spots which pilgrims visit.

The first time I visited the reputed sepulchre, I had disciplined myself not to find fault with any thing, but to enter that church as a believer and a worshipper; the second time, I found it hard to tolerate the bare-faced impositions it contained, and I left the building a sceptic; the third time, after I had gone over all the range of holy places, I left with a feeling almost amounting to repugnance, and, an unbeliever!

I speak as a Protestant, but as one who would gladly recognise any one, who in sincerity and truth loves the Lord and Saviour of mankind, as a fellow Christian. I would not have disturbed those prostrate worshippers, nor have provoked an angry glance from the tearful eyes of those devout pilgrims who were kissing every sacred stone, for the world; but I could not help feeling grateful when I thought of our national Church which could say, not in a pharisaical spirit, but in a spirit of tenderness and love, "we have not so learned Christ." Our hopes centre not in that empty tomb, wherever it may be, but in Him who is alive from the dead and alive for evermore; we need not to aid our faith by looking into a dark sepulchre, but we raise our eyes to the heavens, where He is exalted a Prince and a Saviour.

But apart from this higher question of faith, the utter want of taste, the absence of everything really poetical, was an eyesore and a heartsore to me. If this really was the tomb of Christ, how infinitely better it would

have been to have left it open in the centre of the building, as the Mahommedans have left the bare rough rock in the mosque of Omar. Or how much better still it would have been to have left it with its original canopy, the sky, surrounded by the garden, instead of dressing it out in lace, and jewels, and finery ! It makes one shudder to think of Calvary being inside a church, approached by a flight of marble steps, and to find its rock gilded and garnished with silver lamps dimly lighting it.

The only thing that could make these places impressive to me would be to sweep away the treasures, and to leave them with the same sky above on which He gazed ; to feel the same breeze which fanned His cheek, and to look round upon the city full of toiling, struggling life with which He sympathised, and, to save it, died. But this is not the idea with either the Greek, Roman, Armenian, Coptic, Syrian, or Latin Churches. Their recipe for constructing a holy place is first of all to shut out the light, then to vitiate the air, and then to gather together all the gold, and lace, and tinsel, and finery they can lay their hands upon, dispose these indiscriminately anywhere, and then open the show.

I dare not question the faith of the pilgrims who worship here,—nay, I admire their devotion and self-sacrifice beyond measure, and wish heartily that as much zeal for the True characterised the Protestant community, but I am free to question the miserable avarice which has fostered lie upon lie on the credu-

lous, to answer its own mercenary ends. It would dishonour Him who was not only True, but the Truth, not to deprecate the daring impostures which are perpetrated in this place by those who bear the Christian name.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is an immense series of buildings under one roof, containing not only the sepulchre, but the garden, and Calvary, and dozens of other places. In it Greeks, Romanists, Syrians, Coptics, Armenians, and I know not how many besides, have possessions. No Jew dare cross the threshold, and were he in a fit of curiosity to attempt it, death would probably be the penalty, for "Christians" hate the Jew as the murderer of their Lord, and Moslems hate him as the murderer of a great prophet.

But without lingering any longer on the threshold, let me tell you, briefly, of some of the holy places, describing them in the order in which I saw them.

I. The Stone of Unction, already referred to, on which the body of Jesus was laid for anointing when taken from the cross. All the sects have free access to this part of the church. The stone which the pilgrims kiss, however, is not the actual stone which tradition calls the Stone of Unction, but is a marble covering protecting the real stone, which is not visible.

II. The place where Mary stood while the body of Jesus was being anointed, or where she stood watching the tomb. Slabs of marble inlaid and radiating from a central stone mark the very spot.

III. In the centre of the Rotunda, which is a very handsome building, is The Sepulchre. It "lies within a small chapel, 26 feet long by 18 broad, built of the Santa Croce marble. A long low doorway leads to the sepulchre itself, the western chapel. It is very small, being only 6 feet by 7 feet, or 42 square feet in area, of which space 19 square feet are taken up by the marble slab shown as the Tomb of the Lord. The slab is cracked through the centre, and much worn by the lips of adoring pilgrims. The chapel, marble-cased throughout, so that no rock is anywhere visible, is lit by forty-three lamps always burning."*

IV. The place of the Holy Fire. In one of the walls of the small chapel, enclosing the sepulchre, is a hole, and every year on Easter Eve, thousands of members of the Greek Church assemble from all parts of the world, to witness the most monstrous imposition that ever disgraced the "Christian" name. They say that fire descends from heaven, and lights all the candles within the church. The patriarch, who is alone in the sepulchre, passes out the fire through this hole in the wall, and the pilgrims rush round with their torches and candles, to have them kindled from the sacred flame. Any boy preparing for the 5th of November might perform the trick as successfully as the patriarch. But the superstitious believe in it, and every year the disgraceful riots and sometimes scenes of bloodshed, which occur around the reputed

* "Our Work in Palestine."

tomb of the Saviour, are more abominable than might be found in the temples of Heathendom. In 1834, occurred a scene, which an eye-witness has very graphically described. It is to be found in Curzon's Monasteries of the Levant, and in Murray the conclusion of the tragedy is quoted as follows :—

“The guards outside, frightened at the rush from within, thought that the Christians wished to attack them, and the confusion soon grew into a battle. The soldiers, with their bayonets, killed numbers of fainting wretches, and the walls were spattered with blood and brains of men, who had been felled like oxen, with the butt-ends of the soldiers' muskets. Every one struggled to defend himself, and in the *mêlée*, all who fell were immediately trampled to death by the rest. So desperate and savage did the fight become, that even the panic-struck and frightened pilgrims appeared at last to have been more intent upon the destruction of each other than desirous to save themselves. For my part, as soon as I had perceived the danger, I cried out to my companions to turn back, which they had done, but I myself was carried on by the press, till I came near the door where all were fighting for their lives. Here, seeing certain destruction before me, I made every endeavour to get back. An officer of the Pasha's equally alarmed with myself, was also trying to return ; he caught hold of my cloak, and pulled me down on the body of an old man who was breathing out his last sigh. As the officer was pressing me to the ground, we wrestled

together among the dying and the dead, with the energy of despair. I struggled with this man till I pulled him down, and happily got away upon my legs (I afterwards found that he never rose again), and scrambling over a pile of corpses, I made my way back into the body of the church. The dead were lying in heaps, even upon the Stone of Unction, and I saw full four hundred wretched people, dead and living, heaped promiscuously one upon another, in some places above five feet high."

V. The Greek Church, elaborate as all the Greek Churches are, with heavy gilded decorations. The throne of the patriarch is here.

VI. The centre of the earth, marked by a short marble column, standing in the middle of the Greek Church. I watched a group of pilgrims kiss it devoutly! and did not grudge them any spiritual benefit they might receive from this act of devotion. It may be interesting to know that from this spot the earth was procured from which Adam was created.

VII. The swords, spurs, equipments, and other memorials of the gallant Godfrey de Bouillon. His tomb was once here, and also that of his brother Baldwin. The sword is one that was once a favourite of Godfrey's, and with which he is said to have cloven a giant Saracen in twain; and it is the same sword with which the knights of St John are girt when they are invested with that honourable order.

VIII. The place where Mary stood when she supposed Christ was a gardener, until He said to her,

Mary! and she answered Rabboni. This place is now a chapel! (only think of that touchingly exquisite scene located in a chapel!) and when I entered it, a service was being performed, all the worshippers kneeling, and at intervals, kissing the ground.

IX. The Chapel of Sorrow, or place where Mary wept for Christ after the crucifixion.

X. The tomb of the centurion who said, "Truly this was the Son of God." Also the stone on which tradition says he was beheaded for preaching the gospel.

XI. The prison of Christ and place where He was put in the stocks.

XII. "The Chapel of the division of the Vestments" or the place where the soldiers "cast lots for His vesture."

XIII. The Chapel of Helena, a novel and interesting building, entered by a descent of twenty-nine steps. The chair of Helena is shown where she sat to watch the digging up of the crosses.

XIV. The Chapel of the Invention of the Cross. No one can fail to be struck with the appropriateness of the title, "the *invention* of the cross." The story is too well known to need repetition, how the pious Helena was directed to the spot; how the workmen dug and eventually found three crosses with nails, crown of thorns, superscription, and many other relics most conveniently located together, and in admirable preservation; how she was puzzled to tell which was the true cross, and at last sent for a noble lady to be brought

who was hopelessly ill, and how they laid her upon the different crosses, how two efforts were made without success, and then as soon as ever her body touched the third cross, she was immediately made whole of her grievous malady, thus proving, beyond doubt, that this was the True Cross? Every inch of ground is pointed out with painful precision.

XV. The Chapel of the Crown of Thorns. A column is shown on which the Saviour sat, while they mocked Him, and in a glass case is the Crown of Thorns. I have also seen it in three or four other places.

XVI. Calvary, approached by a flight of marble steps, about fifteen feet I think above the level of the Tomb, and forty yards distant. Gorgeous candle light from silver lamps all around. A plate marks the spot where the cross stood, and two other holes for the crosses of the malefactors are pointed out. Visitors are invited to put their hands into the cavities.

It is called the Chapel of Golgotha—Golgotha meaning a skull—and a curious tradition affirms that Adam was buried here. The legend has more poetry in it than many; for one cannot but think the *idea* in it is, that the blood of the atonement was destined to fall upon the head of the first transgressor.

XVII. The rent in the rocks made at the time of the crucifixion.

XVIII. The place where the rent in the rock penetrated deeper than elsewhere, and the head of Adam sprang out!!

This was the last chapel I visited. I had had enough, and felt sick at heart, and longed to get out into the fresh air and to lay hold of realities. It *was* refreshing to leave the candle-light and to see the glorious Eastern sky which He had so often gazed upon ; to leave the incense-fumes, and breathe the air which He had said "bloweth where it listeth ;" to be amongst men, not priests, with whom He sympathised, and to thank God that after all the real Jerusalem, *His* city, is twenty or thirty feet below these streets and these monkish shows. And those words of angel lips came to us with a rebuke, and yet with a new lesson not easily to be forgotten. "Why seek ye the living among the dead ; He is not here, He is risen."

In the list I have given above, only a few of the curiosities contained in the Church are enumerated, but time and patience would fail to give a complete catalogue.

If the reader is not utterly weary of Holy Places—(I was in visiting them, and had it not been for a feeling that I was bound from a strict sense of duty to *do* Jerusalem while I was there, I should gladly have shirked them,)—will he accompany me in a stroll through the Via Dolorosa ? It need only take us a few minutes, as we shall not have to allow for kissings and prostrations. We will commence our observations from the Church of the Sepulchre, and continue them to the Governor's house on Moriah.

The Via Dolorosa is a narrow, dirty, ill-paved street,

and as crooked as a ram's horn. Yet it has a strange charm about it, and one loves to traverse it again and again to take in its various singularities. At first I could not make out what the fascination of the place could be, but after a tour among the art treasures of Italy, I have no doubt it was from association with pictures that its main interest was derived. But not only this, every turn in the winding street presents a picture in itself worthy of careful study. There, for example, is a low arch just before us; a deep gulf of shadow separates us from an old crumbling doorway, upon which a flood of light is pouring, and a group of women in dazzlingly white robes are kneeling, with an uplifted crucifix before them. There goes a Jew, hurrying past, and drawing his flowing garment round him as though he dreaded the contamination of touch; while coming towards us is a majestic old Arab seated on the extreme end of an ass, clothed in a violet suit, edged with fur, and girded with a white silk girdle, while at his side walk two young Arabs, ideals of graceful beauty, smoking their cigarettes, and showing their pearly teeth as they laugh together. Such wonderful contrasts and incongruities are to be met with every moment in Jerusalem, the eye is weary of seeing, and the ear of hearing.

As we pass along the Via Dolorosa we have pointed out to us (1), The spot where our Saviour said to the daughters of Jerusalem, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and for your children." (2), Where Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to carry the cross; (3),

The house of St Veronica. (Three churches claim to have the handkerchief Veronica presented to the Saviour to wipe the blood from His face, and all of them bear His likeness miraculously impressed upon them.) (4), One of the places where our Saviour fell under the burden of the cross. (5), The house of the rich man, commonly called Dives, and a stone in front of it where Lazarus sat. Strange to say, a couple of lean, ill-favoured dogs were prowling about by this stone in search of offal. (6), An impression in the wall left by the shoulder of our Saviour when leaning against it burdened by the cross. (7), The Ecce Homo arch, with a window in it, from which Pilate said, Behold the man! (8), The Church of the Crown of Thorns, where many of the same people who have already worshipped in the Chapel of the Crown of Thorns in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, come and repeat their adorations, no doubt as acceptable in one place as the other. There is a figure of the Saviour here, crowned with a chaplet of the living thorn, (Nubk, see p. 127). (9), The place from whence the Scala Sancta, which is now at St John Lateran at Rome, was taken. The stairs led to the Judgment Hall, and were trodden by our Saviour.

I was much struck by the wonderful preservation of all these interesting places, seeing that the city was totally destroyed by Titus, and nobody ever heard of the Via Dolorosa till the fourteenth century! And also at the convenient manner in which they are situated, all being in one street at little distances apart,

and forming, so very naturally, "stations" for Romish pilgrims.

From the skull of Adam to the last impression of the foot of Christ upon earth, Jerusalem can furnish for every person, place, and thing, a present local habitation and a name. I will close these remarks upon holy curiosities with one quotation from an American author.

"One of the most curious landmarks of ancient history we found on this morning walk through the crooked lanes that lead toward Calvary. It was a certain stone built into a house—a house that was so seamed and scarred that it bore a sort of grotesque resemblance to the human face. The projections that answered for cheeks were worn smooth by the passionate kissings of generations of pilgrims from distant lands. We asked, 'Why?' The guide said because this was one of the 'very stones of Jerusalem' that Christ mentioned when He was reproved for permitting the people to cry Hosannah! when He made His memorable entry into the city upon an ass. One of the pilgrims said, 'But there is no evidence that the stones *did* cry out. Christ said, that if the people stopped from shouting Hosannah, the very stones *would* do it.' The guide was perfectly serene. He said calmly, 'This is one of the stones that *would* have cried out!' It was of little use to try to shake this fellow's simple faith—it was easy to see that."

The circumference of Jerusalem being only two

miles and a quarter, let us take a quiet stroll round the city, very briefly noting here the principal places of interest as we pass. Starting from the Jaffa Gate we have, on our left hand, the Citadel and tower of Hippicus, before us is the Valley of Hinnom, and, on our right, various hills, not imposing, and by no means fruitful as a rule.

The Valley of Hinnom, or Tophet, is a gloomy gorge, and has a forbidding look about it, although sometimes we came upon pretty spots, but these make the desolate places more desolate by contrast. It was in this valley, in the days of the kings of Judah, that the altars to false and cruel gods were reared; here "they built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire" (Jer. vii. 31). The enigmatical Solomon appears to have originated the hideous rite of sacrifice to Moloch in this place, and to have introduced kindred abominations (2 Kings, xxiii. 10); awful must have been the scenes of cruelty practised here, and awful was the retribution foretold by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. xix.) Scripture is literally fulfilled here (as, indeed, it is all through the land), for it was said, "It shall be called the Valley of Slaughter, for they shall bury in Tophet till there be no more room." It is to this day a wilderness of tombs, filling up the valley, and occupying every cleft and hole of the rocks. The "Mount of Corruption," where Solomon had his idolatrous temples, is the bare hill which bounds this part of

the valley on the right. The associations here are of idolatry, cruelty, death, and corruption. No wonder it is Ge-Hinnom, or Gehenna, the type of Hell.

On a rocky bank in this valley is Aeldema—the Field of Blood. A ruined building marks the site.

The pool of Siloam is before us. There is, happily, no doubt about this being the pool of Siloam, and it is a good place to halt for a minute or two to read the story of the man born blind who came here to wash and to see.

A large mulberry tree, a short way off, attracts attention. It is Isaiah's tree, where tradition says the prophet was sawn asunder.

The valley of Hinnom joins the valley of Jehoshaphat—still one vast cemetery. Nestling on the rocky hill-side, in most improbable-looking places, are some curious dwellings—it is the village of Siloam.

pleasant to sit down and read some of the sweet stories of old, and to think that probably we are in one of the quiet resting places of our Lord when He withdrew from the crowds and talked with His disciples of the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

That night it came on to pour in torrents. To the constant cry of the watchman, there was added the howling of the wind as it came through the valley of Hinnom, and, half awake and half asleep, it seemed to me as though the victims of Moloch mingled their voices with its wailing moan, and the rain spattering down on the tents in a deluge, made but a sorry rest after a tiring day.

For the next day or two the weather was stormy, fierce gusts of cold wind with sharp showers of about half an hour's duration. We spent our time in exploring the city in the intervals of the showers, in "reading up," and in making many purchases of *souvenirs*, particularly those made of olive wood, and then in making them up into one large parcel to be despatched straightway to London, without our having any more trouble with them, a plan I would advise all to adopt.

We were all more or less thankful for the rain in one respect. It kept us in our tents, and so gave us an opportunity of posting up our notes, and adjusting into a little order the confused chaos of thoughts with which the mind of a tourist is burdened in Jerusalem.



XI.—BETHEL—SHILOH—SHECHEM— SAMARIA.

THERE was a great bustle in and around the camp on the morning when we left Jerusalem. At the very early hour of six o'clock many idlers were abroad ; some of the boys from Bishop Gobat's school came down to "air" their English for the last time with the visitors ; nearly all the inhabitants of the Leper village had crawled down and taken up their station in a ditch which skirted the camping ground, in the hope of getting one last dole of backsheesh ; and hawkers of goods, vendors of sweetmeats, and a miscellaneous company, whose generally thievish appearance would make the least suspicious person upon his guard, made up the assembly.

A little incident occurred just before starting, which gave me a painful insight into some of the manners and customs of the people. I had been walking about with my Mackintosh, leggings, and travelling valise in my hand for some time, and carefully deposited them for a moment on some baggage, while I paid a visit to the last tent left standing ; hardly had I been in the tent a minute when, from a

chink in it, I could see a woman take a basket from her head, lift out some water coolers, and deliberately put my goods at the bottom, and then, in a twinkling, cover all over with the earthenwares again, and begin to march off as coolly as possible. The dexterity with which the whole thing was done was marvellous. I was after her without delay, and hauled down the basket from her head. As I did so, one of our dragomans saw me, and as I wanted to tell the woman my opinion of her moral character, asked him to act as interpreter, which he did by suddenly bursting into a hurricane of passion, and commenced lashing her with the long horse-whip he had in his hand. The poor creature clung to me while I insisted upon his leaving off, but his Arab blood was up, and I could only shield the poor culprit and ward off some of the blows without making him desist. A little crowd gathered in an instant, and down came in a towering passion the chief of the guard stationed over our camp. He thrust the dragoman aside, and without a word of inquiry, and before any one was aware, knocked the poor wretched woman down with one blow, and kicked her a violent kick in the back. A dozen English hands were raised in a moment, or I know not what brutality would have followed. This was the native Lynch Law, and when I argued with the dragoman, who was half Syrian and half Egyptian by birth, upon his conduct, he said, "Which is better, to punish her like this and finish it, or to send her to prison for a month or two, and let

her family all go to ruin while she is there?" God pity the poor down-trodden women of the East! There was not a man in the crowd around that poor one who looked on with a glance of pity, or even astonishment; they took the whole thing as a matter of course, nor would they have raised a finger probably to have saved her from murder.

The clouds were gathering heavily as we left Jerusalem, and occasional gusts of cold wind warned us that we might expect a storm before long. However, we were all ready for the start, and slowly our cavalcade passed under the walls of Jerusalem, and we

with it, and the wind was furious. If the face or the hands were exposed to it they were stung with pain. The horses literally "turned tail," not daring to face it, and as they turned and twisted to avoid each driving blast the riders had all their work to prevent themselves from being blown off. It was a storm such as we know nothing about in England, and the curious part of it was that whereas in the early morning it had been as hot as July, during the storm it was as cold as November, so that feet and hands were completely numbed.

The route over which we passed was interesting. It comprehended the supposed site of the ancient Nob, the city of priests, where David eat the shew-bread; the ruins of what was once Gibeah, the town of Saul (1 Sam. x. 26), and many other spots connected with well-known histories, but nothing of these were seen or thought about by us that day, for we had to "hold on by the eyebrows," as sailors say, and give undivided attention to ourselves and our horses. The storm reached its height at Bireh, and we drew up under a wall *en masse*, not a horse having the pluck to move, while the rain came down in such torrents that it was laughable to watch the streams pouring off us on to the backs of the poor beasts.

After four hours of storm and tempest, the sky brightened, and by the time we reached Bethel the weather determined to clear up. One of our dragomans had ridden ahead, and when we arrived in the village we were glad to enter one of the mud houses,

the largest in the place, where a good fire was ready for us. It was rather a drawback that the fire-place on the floor had no chimney, and that the smoke filled the house, and was almost suffocating, although the group of Arab women looking so wonderingly at us, regarded it not. Soon we had an ample luncheon spread, and when that was over and a glow had come back to our numbed feet, we distributed ourselves in parties for little excursions, for it was no use our continuing the journey, as the mules with tents and baggage had not passed us, and an hour or two must be allowed for them to get in advance, so that we might have our travelling hotel ready by the time our day's work was done.

About twenty or thirty huts in the midst of a wilderness of ruin, is Bethel. It only takes a few minutes to explore the town, and a glance into one or two of the filthy dwellings is enough to satisfy the most curious. (We immortalised ourselves in the memory of some half-naked Arab boys, by teaching them to play "King of the Castle," a device for getting warm). Then we enjoyed a stroll.


Bethel stands very high, and on a clear day Jerusalem can be seen from it. But the prophecy "Bethel shall come to nought," has been literally fulfilled; it is nothing but a ruinous heap, burrowed into by the few families who now dwell there. Its highest point is crowned with the ruins of a Greek church.

It was a great relief to come to a place with a

history such as Bethel has, and find it not disfigured with the show places of curiosity-mongers. An old cistern in a grass-grown field hard by arrests attention, for the "wells of water" in Palestine always gather associations round them, and thither we repaired.

It was somewhere here that Abraham came ; somewhere upon these hills on the east of Bethel, he raised an altar and called upon the name of the Lord, who had but just given this land to him and to his seed after him for ever. And when he had gone from here, and had fallen into temptation in Egypt, and had dishonoured his God before the heathen king, who sent him away out of the land, "He went on his journeyings from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai, *unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first, and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.*" (Gen. xiii. 3, 4). A fine theme this for a sermon ! The sinning man, with disgrace in his heart, coming back to the place where he had first communed with God, here to renew his vows, and to start afresh. Well for us all in these days of scepticism and sins of the heart, if we could only do as Abram did, and leave the seats of worldly wisdom to go back to the place where we first realised the Divine and the True, and ever more to "hold fast the beginning of our confidence."

But the eye wanders to that barren hill side yonder where huge stones are lying about in confusion. We see the sun sinking ; and the weary traveller who has



wandered forty miles friendless and alone, seeks for himself a resting-place for the night. "And he took of the stones of the place and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep." He dreamed, and in his dream saw the wondrous vision of angels ascending and descending that shining way which reached from earth to heaven, and behold the Lord stood above it receiving and dismissing the messengers, Himself dispensing blessings. And Jacob's faith acquired a new meaning, he found himself the object of God's individual care ; and when he awoke he dedicated himself by a solemn vow to the service of God. Was that vision created for that special occasion, or were the eyes of Jacob simply opened to see it? Surely the latter, and to-day perpetual communication is passing between earth and heaven, not from Bethel only, but from every spot where a weary heart is seeking for peace. Silently, sweetly, continually ministering spirits are ascending and descending, bearing up the doubts, and fears, and trials, and bitternesses of the heirs of salvation, while from Him who is above the ladder is being sent abundantly and lovingly, gifts of blessing and sweet messages of joy. And not at Bethel, and not in Jerusalem, is *the* "House of God," but everywhere, where the voice from heaven speaks, everywhere, where the sad and desolate hear the Divine One saying, "I am with thee, and will keep thee;" everywhere, where the human echoes to the divine in loving response, "The Lord shall be my God," *there*, be

the revelation in the sanctuary of religion or the sanctuary of home, in the church, or in the field, in the sorrow, or in the joy, that is none other than the House of God, that is the gate of heaven.

The place was instinct with lessons, and we sang as we sat there this well-loved hymn :—

Though like a wanderer ; the sun gone down,
Darkness comes over me, my rest a stone,
Yet in my dreams I'd be, nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

There let my way appear steps unto heaven,
All that Thou sendest me, in mercy given,
Angels to beckon me, nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Then with my waking thoughts, bright with Thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs, Bethels I'll raise,
So by my woes to be, nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee.

Many events of thrilling interest have transpired at Bethel, but one scene perhaps as dramatic as any in old Testament story stands out from the rest as we sit over against those ruins.

When the ten tribes gathered together under the banner of Jeroboam, a difficulty arose as to the place of their worship. They had been accustomed to worship in Jerusalem ; their hearts had thrilled when at the solemn assemblies, they paid their vows in "the beautiful house" their fathers had loved. Jeroboam was wise in his generation, and he knew that religious instincts were the most tenacious of all, and

that the hardest thing to part with is the memory of hallowed joy. He said, "If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again to their lord, even unto Rehoboam, king of Judah, and they will kill me and become subject unto Rehoboam." He was resolved what to do, he would steal the hearts of the people from their old religion by introducing a new; he would institute form for power, under a gorgeous ritual appealing to old loves and old propensities.

So he set up two calves, one at Bethel and one at Dan. And on a certain day he ordained a feast, and round these hills and valleys there gathered the credulous people to see this "new thing" in religion. Great was the pomp, and impressive the ceremonial; and the king himself stood by the altar to burn incense. But He who will not give His glory to another, He who would not bring a flood upon the ungodly till he had first sent a preacher of righteousness, nor destroy the guilty city of Sodom till He had sent angels to visit it, *He* interposed. A prophet of the Lord burst through the wondering crowd, and, approaching the altar, cried aloud, "O altar! altar! thus saith the Lord." Startled, terrified, the people heard the awful prediction of destruction. The king was the first to recover himself, and stretched out his hand to lay hold on the prophet of Judah, but it withered so that he could not draw it back again. A great fear was on the people at this sign from heaven, and greater still, when, as a sign to

attest the divinity of the prophet's errand, the altar—that new altar—was rent in pieces by invisible hands, and its ashes poured out.

Enough this to turn the hearts of the people in penitence to God; but iniquity prevailed; Bethel, the house of God, was changed into Beth-haven, the house of idols, until at length the prophecy was fulfilled in the person of Josiah, who utterly destroyed every memorial of the idolatrous worship, and spared nothing in the city save the sepulchre of the man of God from Judah who had cried that day against the altar.*

Near to Bethel, on the east of the ruined church, there is a hill called El Tel (the heap), and the description and history of it is so concisely given in "Our Work in Palestine," I shall quote it in full.

"Without any reasonable doubt this is the site of Ai. It corresponds exactly to the description when we know the site of Bethel and the site of Abraham's encampment where he built an altar; for we read that he pitched his camp, having Bethel in the north, and Hai in the east. There is a valley behind the ruined heap, where Joshua placed his ambush. There is the spot opposite, across the intervening valley, where Joshua stood to give the preconcerted signal; and there is the plain or ridge down which the men of Ai hurried in pursuit of the retreating Israelites, so that the men in ambush rose and captured the city, and made it 'a heap,' or 'a tel' for ever. Mr George

* See for the whole story, 1 Kings xii., xiii., 2 Kings xxiii. 15-20.

Williams has pointed out that the word which is translated 'heap' in our version exactly corresponds to the Arab rendering 'tel.'"

Having explored the neighbourhood of Bethel, Edwin and I, being still very wet and cold, started off to walk to our camping-place for the night. Our road was rather a rough one, and the loose rocks and stones were somewhat slippery after the rain, but we were well repaid for all our toil. The views were lovely, and as we passed 'Ain Yebrûd, one of the most fertile spots in the fertile land of Ephraim, with its fig orchards and olive groves, and corn fields dressed in living green, the cold wind departed, a balmy air came in its stead, November passed again into July, and a broad smile came over the face of nature in the "clear shining after rain." The land of Ephraim is an earthly paradise, and still the blessing of "the precious things of the earth and the fulness thereof" rests upon it.

At the end of a wild ravine, beside a spring called "The Robber's Fountain," we were surprised to find our tents pitched, as we had proposed going on as far as to Singel. But the dragomans, who are weather-wise men, saw another storm brewing, and thought it best to pitch the camp without delay. We were in a very undesirable place to halt, for deeds of blood have made this lovely spot a dread to travellers. However, we met with no adventure, save that all the tent-gear, beds, bedding, and especially the floor of our apartments were wringing wet. We put on the driest clothes we could find, and slept in the damp

beds, which would have given us rheumatism for life at home, but strange to say, nobody caught cold or was any the worse for the damp.

I pitied our poor muleteers, wet through and through, with no change of garments, most of them walking hard all day, and all of them lying about wherever they could find a bit of shelter through the stormy night. I sat with them round the fire, as was my wont, to enjoy the fragrant evening pipe, and was quite touched with their generous solicitude to make me comfortable, and to dry my boots, although they were quite indifferent about their own soaking garments. I cannot tell how I longed to talk to those noble fellows (many will laugh at the idea of Arabs being noble fellows, no matter), and to tell them of rest and of peace, and of a higher and diviner life. There was something inexpressibly melancholy in seeing so much capability wasted, and to know that if only the light and truth were to shine into their hearts, there was not an inch of ground over which they daily passed, but across it they might read the handwriting of the Almighty.

A lovely morning dawned after the tempestuous night; the patches of green were very green, and the white rocks very white; even the dull olives had a glow of pleasing colour in them; and ten thousand wild flowers made a carpet of exquisite beauty. We passed Singel—a good camping place—and a pleasant ride brought us to Shiloh, where we dismounted and explored.

He must be a strangely matter-of-fact person, who can look for the first time on any great historical place standing desolate in the midst of desolation, without being stirred. Who saw the charred and blackened skeleton of the Louvre and Hotel de Ville, after the siege of Paris, without emotion? And he must be a much more strangely prosaic person who could gaze on Shiloh, once the dwelling-place of the King of kings and Lord of lords, now lying with a curse resting upon it, a mere ruined heap in the midst of utter desolation, without saying, "Behold the goodness and the severity of the Lord."

We clambered up the hill, over masses of debris, huge stones, and pieces of columns, and then sat down to read how, in the long long ages past, probably in the very spot where we sat on the summit of the hill, the Tabernacle was first set up in the Land of Canaan, after the wilderness journey, and remained here till the time of Eli's death.

Here, on these plains and valleys, and hill sides, the whole congregation of Israel assembled to receive their inheritance in the land, "And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord, and Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their divisions." (Josh. xviii. 10.)

To this place, Hannah, the woman of a sorrowful spirit, came yearly to the sacrifice; and one year she came with a great joy in her heart, for God had given her a son, and she brought with her the infant Samuel to dedicate him as a gift to God. As the child grew

and ministered before the Lord, it was her joy to visit him year by year and bring to him the "little coat" which her own loving hands had made. (1 Sam. i.) "It was somewhere here, that one night as the child Samuel was laid down to sleep, the echoes of the Temple service making songs in the night for him, he heard a voice. It was the voice of God; the very voice which can rend the heavens, which spoke a world into being and will speak it into destruction, and it called 'Samuel!' And the child answered, 'Here am I,' *and he ran unto Eli.* I think there is something exquisitely touching and beautiful in this story. It gives us a child's idea of God; the purest, the best in all the world. So human, so tender, so unalarming was that voice, whose could it be, but the voice of the one he loved and confided in more. So he ran unto Eli. How often God speaks and calls us to Himself, and the call comes in a loved familiar voice, linking all that is dearest in the human with all that is comprehensible in the divine, and bringing out instinctively, the cry, 'Here am I!' Would that men would listen to hear that voice as Samuel heard it, and recognise it as a voice in tune with our highest ideas of love and tenderness, instead of hearing it as the people that stood by the Saviour heard it, and said, it thundered. In the latter case, the people for whose sakes the voice was sent believed not on Him, but 'Samuel grew and the Lord was with him.'"*

* From "The Way and the Life," by Edwin Hodder.

Many and strange scenes were enacted at Shiloh ; the sins of the sons of Eli ; the doom of his house ; the tragic end of the old man as he heard in a breath of the desolation of his own house, and the desolation of the house of God. With the loss of the ark, Shiloh lost all. With the exception of the visit in disguise of the wife of Jeroboam to the prophet Ahijah when the doom of that sinful house was foretold, (1 Kings xiv. 1-17.) Shiloh passes away, its glory has gone ; and in the days of Jeremiah the prophet, the sweeping destruction which has come upon it, is used as a prophecy and a type of the desolation which should fall upon the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

"Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and *see what I did to it* for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not, and I called you, but ye answered not ; therefore will I do unto this house, which is called by my name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh." (Jer. vii. 12-14.) "I will make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth." (Jer. xxvi. 6.)

Stanley and Porter speak of the country round about Shiloh, as having "a desolate forbidding aspect not relieved by a single bold feature." Such was not the impression produced upon my mind. The plain

was carpeted with green in the spring time when I saw it; even to the hill sides there was good cultivation and apparently rich fertility, and it was this pleasant landscape which formed so striking a contrast to the large ruined heap which marks the site of Shiloh.

Our journey was continued through much more civilised country than we had seen in the south, until we came to a ridge from which a splendid view is obtained of a plain seven miles long and two broad, with hills on either side, and on the left hand, in the distance, there is a hill with a small building on the top. That is Gerizim, the Mount of Blessing. At this point, we saw a wedding procession made up of some hundreds of people, who fired off guns indiscriminately, and gave rather a warlike appearance to a peaceful festival, more especially as the majority of people in the crowd wore scarlet.

It was a pleasant ride across the plain; (it was the very way *He* must have walked as *He* went to and from Jerusalem), and when in the heat, very weary after seven hours' journey without a morsel to eat, we came to Jacob's well, it was a grateful sight to see luncheon spread. Think not, devout reader, that these incongruities are profanities; people get hungry in Palestine, and wet in holy places, and crack jokes, and are just as human and mortal as in merry England.

There is nothing to see at Jacob's well, except a hole. Our dragomans had a long rope, "for the well is deep," and lowered a can, but the well was as dry as a bone. It was a disappointment, and so it was to

find a mere hole; I had hoped to have sat on the top of the well, upon some old well-worn stone where, perhaps, He sat, but the well top is in Rome, say some, at St Sophia, in Constantinople, say others. We descended a kind of cutting in the ground to see the opening, and here we sat while one of the party read aloud the iv. of John. Never was a word picture more graphically and artistically drawn. We could see the woman coming down the valley between the two hills, Ebal and Gerizim, and could picture her very attitude as she turned to Gerizim, and said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." There is the tomb of Joseph only a stone's-cast off, "in the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem" (Josh. xxiv. 32.) It is a plain (white-washed or plastered) little building now, with the Mahomedan dome over it. Around us are the corn-fields, at this season of the year bright with the green tender blade, but they are the same fields which illustrated the lesson He taught His disciples when He said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." (John iv. 35.)

It was pleasant to sit here and think of what might perhaps have been some of the thoughts of the Saviour as He sat thus on the well, being wearied with His journey;—perhaps He was thinking of Abraham, who built his first altar in the land in this opening of the plain, (Gen. xii. 6); or of Jacob, whose only possession in the land of promise was here, (xxxiii. 19); and even then, bought and paid for as it had been, it

was taken from him by the Amorites, but he reconquered it from them ; (" I took it out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow," said the dying old man, Gen. xlviii. 22),—and left it to Joseph, who, long years afterwards gave commandment concerning his bones, which were brought from Egypt and buried here, (Josh. xxiv. 32).

Perhaps He thought of Joseph wandering in that very field in search of his brethren, (Gen. xxxvii. 15), and saw in the persecution of the brethren, and the final victory of the beloved son, one of the divine pictures of the past testifying of himself.

Or perhaps His thoughts were dwelling upon that great gathering of all Israel when first they came into the land, and there was set before them that day a blessing and a curse. Perhaps He heard again the "amen" of the people as the curses were uttered from Ebal ; or saw the smile of joy as the blessings on heart, and home, and land, and business, were pronounced from Gerizim ; and perhaps He "sighed deeply" as He grieved for the hardness of the hearts of that favoured people, who had gone in the way of evil, and brought upon them all the full letter of the awful doom pronounced upon the disobedient. (See Deut. xi. 29, 30, xxvii. ; Josh. viii. 30-35).

No wonder that in the midst of associations such as these, He should say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." Before Him was unrolled throughout that land the volume of the ages, and in every page He read the "things concerning Himself."

At Shechem we were encamped in a most charming spot, in the midst of by far the most beautiful scenery we have yet seen in Palestine, surrounded by gardens and water-brooks. There was only one drawback, and that was, that we were beset with lepers, and others afflicted with divers diseases, who wailed and whined, and would not be appeased. We often thought of the crowds who thronged Him, and of His compassion and longsuffering ; and in petulant moments we could also feel a certain kind of sympathy with the disciples who "would have sent them away."

Shechem, in the days of Vespasian, was named Neapolis, and it is now called Nabulus or Nablûs. It has one long street and many smaller ones leading from it ; the houses are for the most part built of stone, some of them quite handsome ; and the streets are paved with the most awkward stones that could have been got together. In the bazaars there is the usual amount of noise amongst the buyers, and blissful indifference on the part of the sellers. The young men and boys have a bad name for behaving with great incivility, and sometimes brutality, to travellers, but we were not put to the proof of this.

I did not go to see the great sight of Shechem, namely, the Samaritan pentateuch, having been assured by a friend who has seen it many times, that it is not so precious as hopeful travellers have made it out to be, and that probably it is not two hundred years old ; and by another, that ordinary travellers are never shown the original, but a comparatively modern copy, which

does duty for the old one which is wearing out rapidly.

The Samaritans in Shechem are only a small community, numbering about one hundred and twenty individuals in all; they intermarry only amongst themselves; they have their own high priest, and celebrate worship in their own synagogue every Sabbath day; they pray towards Gerizim, at the top of which there is a mass of ruin, all that remains of their once famous temple. The great event of the year with them is the celebration of the Feast of the Passover, a splendid description of which has been given by Dean Stanley.

The ascent to Gerizim is steep, but it is such a delightful journey that the traveller is well repaid; the scenery is romantic, and the curiosities, such as the place of the annual sacrifice and ruins of the temple, are full of interest. On the summit of Gerizim is the Holy place of the Samaritans, and I know not how many traditions which they have appropriated to themselves, are gathered round it. Here they say Abraham offered up Isaac, Jacob saw the vision, and called the place Bethel; the Tabernacle was first set up here, &c., &c.

Some of our party, anxious to settle whether it would have been possible for the children of Israel to have heard the speakers from the mountains Ebal and Gerizim, sent up two of the "clericals," each with a Bible, and as they read from the book of Deuteronomy, those in the plain could distinctly hear every word,

and so might thousands, the amphitheatre of hills making a kind of natural "sounding-board."

Of the things that I personally enjoyed at Shechem, nothing exceeded the pleasure of a moon-light stroll. Never do I remember to have known so brilliant a night, I could read the small print of my pocket Bible without straining my eyes. Our encampment looked like a fairy creation in the pure light, surrounded by the luxuriant and fanciful foliage ; while the sounds of busy life, the song of the Arab muleteer, and the murmuring of waters came up to the hill top where I sat, in pleasant harmony.

Crowded as this valley is with associations, there are "two days" which the heart finds pleasure in remembering more than all beside. They were the two days which Jesus spent with the Samaritans—what busy days for *the* "woman of Samaria"—the first female missionary—in telling all the city "come see a man which told me all things that ever I did ;"* what eager listening crowds, and what glorious arguments must have been employed to have moved those prejudiced, bigoted men, and what a grand confession went forth from this valley, the first fitting acknowledgment He ever received of His divinity and humanity, "We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

As I mused on these things, a group of about thirty people, on a lower ridge of the hill on which I sat,

* Her eagerness is admirably expressed in Sir W. Sterndale Bennett's "Woman of Samaria," in the solo "Come see a Man."

attracted my attention. They were only muleteers, but one was sitting on a stone raised above the others, telling a story—a favourite diversion with the Arabs—and the rest were close round, drinking in the words which fell from his lips. No doubt it was only a story of the Arabian Nights stamp, but their earnest attention, their picturesque grouping, and the soft and tender beauty of the scene around, made me feel as though I saw a vision of one incident in those memorable “two days.”

Next morning as we went on our journey up the valley, I thought I had never seen a more beautiful garden than this land of Samaria; every variety of spring vegetation, babbling brooks, little villages dotting the hill sides, forests of fine old olives, flocks of sheep and goats, and all this under the bluest of all blue skies and the brightest of all bright sunshine; the costume of every peasant, the construction of every field-implement or commonest object having an interest and novelty to add to the other charms.

At length we halted at a hill, beautiful for situation and commanding many noble views. There is a small dirty village of about fifty or sixty houses—if such a complimentary term is admissible—upon it, and the whole is surrounded by the prickly pear, which makes a good wall of defence.

And this is Samaria! Once the site of Ahab's temple, the scene of the awful siege (2 Kings vi.), the place where Herod's palaces were reared. Everywhere there are traces of former grandeur in the midst

of present degradation. That miserable hovel over there, which has but one room, with a bare floor and a fire-place scooped out of it, and no chimney to let the smoke escape, has built into it a slender shaft, with almost worn-out traces of curious workmanship upon it, intended once to please a monarch's eye. It is a common notion that the manifested "glory of God" must necessarily refer to great and glorious works. The heavens declare His glory; the sea is His and He made it; the goodly hills of Lebanon speak of Him; but not one whit less does this ruined heap which once was Samaria. Every column lying in the dust proclaims the justice, wisdom, and power of God, and the desolate hill speaks to every passer by, that the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

"Samaria shall become desolate for she hath rebelled against her God." (Hos. xiii. 16).

The modern name of Samaria is Sebustiyeh, from Sebaste the name given it by Herod. A mosque—once a Christian church dating from the early time of the Crusades—partly in ruins, is supposed to be the special object of interest in the place, as it contains the tomb of St John the Baptist, as well as the prison into which he was thrust, and the place of his execution. We visited these, and saw also a massive stone door four feet high, two wide, and six thick, said to be the very door of John's prison.

Tastes differ as to what is best to admire, and to my mind there was nothing more interesting or significant in Samaria than its desolation. There

is a massive gateway in ruin. It is the gate of Ahab, where the four lepers sat, and through which the hungry and frenzied crowds poured when the city was deserted by the panic-stricken army (2 Kings vi., vii.)

The great Colonnade, or "Street of the Columns," may also be clearly traced. It was once the main street of Samaria, and now all that remains is sixty or seventy columns without capitals standing in a double row at intervals and winding round the hill. There are "heaps" here and there which are pointed out as once being the palace of Ahab, or the old market, or some place of historic interest, while amidst them stand these solitary shafts like witnesses from the dead, pointing up to Him who said, "I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard, and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." (Micah i. 6).

We were accompanied from Shechem to Samaria by Mr Karey, the missionary, who from having lived ever since his birth in Shechem, and from his study of the Scriptures relating to events which occurred in this neighbourhood, was able to impart much valuable information, and pointed out the probable positions taken up by the Syrian army, the sites of ancient buildings, and other details in a very vivid manner. It will interest some to know that Mr Karey is doing a good work in this place, and that success is crowning his efforts.

A pleasant ride of three quarters of an hour brought

us to a deserted village called Burka, where we lunched and gave the empty bottles, marked "Bass," to the Muleteers to play at "cock shy," to their hearts delight. Then by a mountain pass, until we gained a height where a splendid panorama of the plain of Esdraelon with the Hermon range in the far distance burst on our sight, while at our feet was Dothan, where Joseph went to find his brethren. As we looked down into the plain we watched a train of Arabs with laden camels passing through the country. It was just the right finish to the picture, as we had no difficulty in recognising in them the caravan of the Ishmaelites. It was moreover just one of those incidents which, when travellers described, I always doubted, until I visited the land.* It was in this plain that Elisha dwelt when Samaria was invaded by the army of the Syrians, and the plot of that strange drama is laid here, of the attempt to capture the prophet, the vision of the prophet's servant who beheld this hill on which we stood full of horses and chariots of fire, and the miracle of blindness falling upon the foe. (2 Kings vi. 8-23).

On this hill I was riding one of the pack horses lent me by Khalil, one of our assistant dragomans, in exchange for "Judas." The beast had run away with me all across a plain of three or four miles long, and having only a single chain round his neck instead of reins, and no stirrups—carpets and other baggage,

* See page 107.

too wide to stride, being across his back—I was quite powerless to pull him back, and had “to hold on by the teeth” until the hill stopped him. Then, as we were descending the hill, and I was sitting cross-legged like a Turk on the carpets, enjoying a cigarette and a page of Murray after the excitement of the run, the beast slipped upon some smooth rock and sent me flying a back somersault while he took one forwards. So after this Frank and our merry Irish clergyman—whose horse “Baalbec” had become disaffected—joined me in a walk through the “land of robbers,” winding in and out through a series of ravines which we made to echo with English songs till we came to Jenin—(once En-gannin a city of Issachar (Josh. xix. 21), our camping place for the night. Jenin is a lovely spot with a few picturesque palms and a wilderness of prickly pears. The sun was setting while the full moon was shining, the hills stood out in exquisite relief, and the great plain of Esdraelon was flooded with liquid colours.





XII.—ESDRAELON AND ITS SURROUND-
INGS. MAGARRETH.

Esdraelon is, as the Guide Book says, "the great battle-field of Palestine." It is somewhere about twelve miles broad and eighteen miles long, and if we had not known it, there is a certain look about the place which would induce one to say it was designed for a battle-field. Here Barak gained the victory over Jabin, and Gideon performed his ingenious stratagem with the "lamps, pitchers, and trumpets," to the discomfiture of the Midianites. Here the Philistines prevailed against Saul, and Josiah was killed in his encounter with the King of Egypt. The place where this last event happened was Megiddo, the widest and most central part of the plain; and in the Revelation of St John, when he speaks of the Great Battle of the future, he lays the scene of it here under the name of the Great Battle of Armageddon, *i.e.*, the city of Megiddo. We shall have to refer to some of these events again as we journey through the plain.

Esdraelon, from the time the first travellers passed over it until this very day, has retained one characteristic,—the recklessness and lawlessness of the wandering hordes who scour it for the sake of plunder. Armed shepherds watch the sheep; the passing peasant carries firearms in abundance; the harvests are gathered in at great risk, and the produce has to be stowed away in caves and holes.

During my journey to Zerîn some men, with only their eyes visible under a head gear which formed a mask, and every kind of weapon around themselves

and their horses, accosted me. They were genuine sons of the desert, and seemed as though they would like to make my further acquaintance, but while I answered in English the few questions they addressed to me in Arabic, I was glad to be able to point them to the cavalcade coming across an undulation in the distance, which had until then hidden them ; so I was dismissed with a salaam. In another place there was a gully with large blocks of stone scattered in it, and behind these stones a party of Bedouin were lying with their guns by their side. They, too, would have been charmed with my society, and one hang-dog looking villain came to me and asked for tobacco, which I gave him, and noticed that he, too, was disappointed as he saw the procession advancing.

Through a field-glass I got a good view of some ruins upon a small rising ground about a couple of miles off. It is El-Fûleh, once a stronghold of the Knights Templars, but in later times memorable for a great French victory. Kleber, the General of Napoleon, came from Nazareth, to attack the Turkish army, having with him only a handful of men, that is to say, 3000 ; he was met by 30,000, and here, in the open plain, for six weary hours, he held his own, and succeeded in doing much slaughter, unequal as the contest was in point of numbers. As the day advanced, Napoleon came to the rescue, and the French gained the day in what history calls "the Battle of Mount Tabor."

But Napoleon's name is intrusive in Palestine. Let

us turn to this dirty village on the hill top, and as we go be careful to have an eye as to where our horses are treading, for the place is full of pitfalls. Everything that requires safe keeping must be stored in these subterranean granaries, or it would fall into the clutches of the Bedouin. There are about thirty or forty miserable dwellings on the hill, one tall tower, various heaps of rubbish and broken sarcophagi, and as threadbare a population as you would wish to find anywhere out of Egypt. The village is now called Zerîn, but once this height was covered with costly temples and palaces of world-wide fame. It is the site of Jezreel.

It must have been a splendid place in Ahab's day. The views it commands are very fine, stretching right away to Carmel on the one side, and to the Jordan valley on the other. We can make out, without a shadow of doubt, the road along which Ahab drove when Elijah was his runner, and we think how different the sky must have looked then, black and heavy with rain, to what it does to-day, with its intense blue, unmarred by cloud, or haze, or vapour. We can trace the road along which Jehu drove furiously his tragic drive when Joram and Ahaziah fell slaughtered by his hand. We look to that town which is standing a ruin on the hill, and although it has, of course, nothing to do with Ahab's palace, yet one shudders at it, for the form of Jezebel, as "she painted her eyes, and tired her head, and looked out at a window," rises before the imagination, and the

sickening details of that horrible story make one turn aside, for the wild pariah dogs, just as Stanley saw them, and as any traveller may see them any day, are prowling round the spot, and the scene becomes painfully realistic.

We look down upon fields, one of which was the possession of Naboth, a field which, as some one has said, has written upon it in letters of blood, "Be-

This is 'Ain Jâlûd, or The Fountain of Jezreel—sometimes called The Fountain of Gideon. For it was here that Gideon was encamped, and at this fountain each of the three hundred picked men “lapped the water with his tongue as a dog lappeth ;” and the Lord said unto Gideon, “By the three hundred that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand,” (Judg. vii. 7). So while the Midianites slept, he distributed his men round their camp, each with a light hidden in a pitcher, and a trumpet in his right hand ; and when the cry rang through the startled air, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon !” and the lights gleamed around, and the trumpet blast resounded, then a scene of wild confusion ensued, every man’s hand was against his fellow in the panic-stricken camp, and the enemy fled vanquished.

One other scene has rendered this spot memorable, the victory of the Philistines and the downfall of king Saul—but I shall refer to this a little later on.

Come now across the valley which we skirted to get to 'Ain Jâlûd ; we are bound for that cluster of trees yonder, at the foot of a ridge of Little Hermon and Gilboa. It is a rough ride to reach it, over ploughed fields and deep bogs, from which at times it seems the horses must fail to extricate themselves.

The little village on the hill side is Sôlem, the Shunem of Holy Scripture. There is nothing to see in the village itself, except a wilderness of beautiful vegetation, and the prickly pear surrounding all ; so we moved away to a spot but a short distance off,

where we found enchanted ground. It was a grove of orange and lemon trees laden with fruit, and the air richly scented with their delicious perfume. A spring of water near at hand, grassy mounds under the trees to recline upon, the green canopy overhead flecked with streaks of sunshine, a picturesque group of village maidens offering water from their pitchers to the weary travellers ; and plenty of luscious fruit for refreshment ; this was the place of places to make a long halt, and open the Book which tells the graphic story that has made Shunem memorable for ever. It was a favourite resort of the prophet Elisha, and whenever he came this way, he called upon a certain Shunamite woman, who had a great reverence for the holy man. She built for him a little chamber on the wall, and "set for him a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick. And it shall be," said the hospitable woman, "when he cometh to us that he shall turn in thither." She did it

"Not for the sake of gaining ought, nor seeking a reward ;"

she was a woman of humble piety, and cared not for preferment at court, and Elisha knew not how to repay her kindness. Then he made glad her heart by telling her that she should have a son, and in process of time the house at Shunem became a home, the prattle of a little child making music there.

"And when the child was grown, it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto his father, My head, my head ! And he said

to a lad, carry him to his mother. And when he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and then—died! And she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God, and shut the door upon him, and went out.” (2 Kings iv. 18-21). Swift as love could bear her she drove across the plain to Carmel, and back again in eager haste with the prophet, whose prayer of faith brought back the child again from the regions of the dead.

While Edwin and Frank rode on with others of the party to Nain and Endor, I strolled about in the neighbourhood of Shunem with the Bible, and Stanley, and Murray, to make out and study the story of Saul's defeat and death. (1 Sam. xxviii.-xxx.)

On the very ground where Gideon, “strong in the Lord and the power of His might,” had gathered his armies around him, close by the Fountain of Jezreel, Saul pitched his camp, while the Philistines were encamped here at Shunem. The armies were in full sight of each other, and between them lay the plain over which we had just had so rough a ride. “And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly.” In the midst of his camp he is alone. Samuel, on whose advice he could have relied, is dead; David, whose prowess helped him out of an apparently greater difficulty than the one that lies before him, is estranged. He has no one to whom he can go, he has by his sins estranged himself from God; yet he seeks to the Urim and Thummim, that ancient oracle, but it is dumb. The Lord

answered him not by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. Suspense is unbearable; if he cannot get an answer from heaven, can he from hell? In his distress and anxiety he bids a messenger go seek a woman that had a familiar spirit—the very class of impostors his own decree, instigated by Samuel, had banished from the land. In the great crises of the soul, if faith fails, superstition must take its place; when all hope in man has gone, the soul must go back upon God, and if He answers not, then the spirit-world must find a substitute. The messenger returns and tells him of the Witch of Endor, and under the cover of darkness he sets out with two attendants to consult her. It is a perilous journey, but what is this outward peril compared with "the horror of great darkness" upon his soul?

From where I stood, on the slope of Little Hermon, just above the place where the Philistines were encamped, the road which Saul took can be unmistakably traced. He must have crossed the plain, gone round the left flank of the enemy, ascended the ridge of Little Hermon, and then have gone down a rather steep descent to Endor.

There God answered him, there the Father of spirits permitted His servant Samuel to speak with Him from the dead, there the strong delusion which believed a lie was used by the Almighty as an instrument to His own ends; there the proud and reckless Saul, the godless man, yet God's anointed, heard his death knell rung from the spirit world and his doom pro-

"To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be-

with me ; the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hands of the Philistines."

Back through the darkness to his camp, and at the breaking of the day, To arms ! The Philistines poured down the valley, the Israelites were forced up the hill slopes of Gilboa, "And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him, and he was sore wounded of the archers."

Terrified with a great soul-terror, seeking death but finding it not, and dreading to be made the sport and mock of the Philistines if captured, he begged his armour-bearer to thrust him through. Even this last boon was denied ; fixing his sword into the blood-stained ground with the energy of despair, he fell upon it, and so perished Israel's king.

In Mr Stanley's book, this vivid passage occurs, "The Philistines instantly drove the Israelites up the slopes of Gilboa, and however widely the route may have carried the mass of the fugitives down the valley to the Jordan, the thick of the fight must have been on the heights themselves ; for it was 'on Mount Gilboa' that the wild Amalekite, wandering like his modern countrymen over the upland waste, 'chanced' to see the dying king ; and 'on Mount Gilboa' the corpses of Saul and his three sons were found by the Philistines the next day. So truly has David caught the peculiarity and position of the scene which he had himself visited only a few days before the battle. (1 Sam. xxix. 2.) 'The beauty of Israel is slain upon *thy high places* ; O Jonathan, thou wast slain upon

thine high places;' as though the bitterness of death and defeat were aggravated by being not in the broad and hostile plain, but on their own familiar and friendly mountains. And with an equally striking touch of truth, as the image of that bare, and bleak, and jagged ridge rose before him, with its one green strip of table land, where probably the last struggle was fought,—the more bare and bleak from its unusual contrast with the fertile plain from which it springs,—he broke out into the pathetic strain, 'Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no rain upon you, neither dew, nor *fields of offerings*; for there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.'" (2 Sam. i. 17-27.)

Leaving the pleasant grove, we mounted and proceeded towards Mount Tabor, passing across the head of the great plain. From different points of view, this mountain assumes various appearances. At one place, it is rough and rugged as though giants had hurled down stones from its summit; at another it has a steep sharp outline as though it had been moulded into shape by human hands; again it presents a series of terraces planted with trees from base to summit. Curiously various are these near views, and more beautiful but not less curious are its aspects as seen from afar, tinted with purple in the evening gloaming; bright in the burning heat of the mid-day blaze, or wreathed with mysterious haze in the grey dawning.

No traveller would mistake Tabor any more than

he would the Coliseum in Rome, for as Tabor is among the mountains, so is the Coliseum in architecture. It is unique in its solitary grandeur. With the exception of a narrow ridge connecting it with the hills of Nazareth, quite unseen as you look towards it from Esdraelon, it stands completely alone, rising abruptly, the solitary sentinel of the plain. Is this really "the Holy Mount" where Peter, James, and John saw the Master transfigured before them? If it had never been doubted, I for one should never have doubted it. Standing alone, commanding such a magnificent view, it seems just the place for that wondrous scene. And yet that glimpse of heaven needed not any earthly surroundings to make it more impressive, it was so purely a revelation of heaven, that nothing is gained by fixing it in the midst of beautiful or barren scenery. It would be very interesting, however, to know the exact spot where our Lord manifested His glory; but we must look for it somewhere nearer to Cesarea Philippi, on one of the ridges of Hermon, for although Tabor is still and silent now, in the time of our Lord, there is little doubt, a fortified town covered the whole plateau on its summit, and a fortified town does not assist one to a true idea of the scene. Some argue that it might have been on the side of Tabor and not necessarily upon the summit, but we do not think these persons can have seen the mountain, or they would not so have argued; moreover, even if the difficulty as to the part of the mountain where the scene occurred were overcome, there still remains the

difficulty that it does not reconcile the principal difficulty, namely, the great distance that Tabor is from the places where Christ was found immediately before and after the Transfiguration.

Many travellers make it a point of conscience to ascend the mountain, and see the place where Barak mustered his forces, and descended with 10,000 men after him, to meet and conquer Sisera, who had gathered all his hosts together unto the brook Kishon, but not one of our party ventured on the excursion. The fact was, as far as I was concerned, I grudged the time for the ascent before going to Nazareth, and when I got there, nothing could induce me to leave it :

in the whole tour. But Frank took me into his confidence, and said, "From the place where you stood and saw Nain, it is very pretty, but the nearer you get to it, the more the dream vanishes, until when you are there you lose it altogether. And as to Endor, we went close up to some caves or quarries, which, as one of the party said, might have furnished the materials for Ahab's palace, as the quarries at Jerusalem did for the temple, but we did not go into them, and did not therefore see much more than you did."

It is not, in Palestine, so much what you see with the eye as what you feel in your heart, that gives the thrilling interest; and I would rather have stood a little way off and seen the village, than have gone inside a church to have seen the bier or the shroud of the widow's son. Willis has sweetly told the story, which makes Nain a sacred place for ever.

"Forth from the city gate the pitying crowd
Follow'd the stricken mourner. They came near
The place of burial, and, with straining hands
Closed upon her breast, she clasped the pall,
And with a gasping sob, quick as a child's,
And an enquiring wildness flashing through
The thin grey lashes of her fevered eyes,
She came where Jesus stood beside the way.
He look'd upon her, and His heart was moved,
'Weep not,' He said, and as they stayed the bier,
And at His bidding, laid it at His feet,
He gently drew the pall from out her grasp,
And laid it back in silence from the dead.
With troubled wonder, the mute throng drew near,

“ON HOLY GROUND.”

And gazed on His calm looks. A minute's space
He stood and pray'd. Then, taking the cold hand,
He said 'Arise !' And instantly the breast
Heaved in its cerements, and a sudden flush
Ran through the lines of the divided lips,
And with a murmur of his mother's name,
He trembled, and sat upright in his shroud,
And while the mourner hung upon his neck,
Jesus went calmly on His way to Nain."

And now we turn our faces towards the range of
s yonder, rising abruptly from the plain. Long
ore we reach the base we speculate how the hill is
be scaled, and wonder who was the first to pitch
tent where those few shining white houses mark

plants his feet in improbable places, picking his way with marvellous sagacity and tugs for the top.

After rising perhaps 800 or 1000 feet, we see the town lying embedded among the hills. Around us are cornfields cultivated to the very edge of precipices, and ravines and gullies are turned into fruitful gardens of figs and olives. A steep, stony way leads into the town, and if we wondered how the natives could have left the far approach in so bad a state, the feeling is increased still more as we near the town itself. For, just as we came up to the houses, we found two steeply-banked ditches which had to be crossed, and we fairly jumped into Nazareth. If the morrow had not been Sunday, I think it would have been impossible to have restrained an American gentleman of our party from commencing to bridge over the ditch at once. A few hours' work with the materials only a few yards off the spot, and the thing might be done; but "what has been may be" is Arab policy, and no doubt this inconvenience has been where it now is for ages, and will be there until a better government than the Turkish prevails in the land.

Interest attaches to every body and everything in Nazareth. Everywhere the eye rests on a view of quiet beauty. The people are remarkable for their grace and good looks, and some of the women, especially the girls of fifteen or sixteen, are surpassingly lovely. Just before entering the busy part of the town I was particularly struck with the wonderful

beauty of a boy about fourteen or fifteen who was lying on the ground with a book in his hand—a very rare thing to see in the East—and looking over the valley as though in pensive study. It reminded me at once of Him who in those thirty years had so often gazed from these heights and read the histories written in the plains below.

Nor could we fail to be charmed with the picturesque group at the Fountain of the Virgin. A dozen unveiled women, some with their little ones poised on their shoulders were standing here filling their pitchers from the sparkling stream as it rushes out from the three openings of the fountain; some were just turning away with their pitchers on their heads, while other some were lingering to enjoy the evening gossip with their neighbours. It was a thoroughly Oriental scene, one that Goodall would have been glad to have transferred to canvas. There can be little doubt that she who was blessed among women, and whose memory many good Protestants err in so lightly esteeming, often came here, and would often be accompanied by the holy child Jesus. Greek tradition says that it was here Mary received the salutation of the Angel; the Latins, however, deny it, and mark out the exact spot where she stood, which is, of course, in the Latin Convent. Be this as it may, we were content to know that this fountain must have been often visited by her, and many a time as he came past here on his way home

thirst at this very stream whose waters we gladly drank as a cup of blessing.

The next day was the Sabbath, and early in the morning Frank, Edwin, and I set out together to explore. First we went on to the hills bounding our encampment, and found them honey-combed with tombs; here we sat down and read all that St Luke's gospel tells us of Nazareth, to give a key-note to the harmonies of the day. Then! into the town, which is ill-paved and dirty, although there are many good substantial houses, some of them much cleaner and more tasteful than one is accustomed to see in Palestine. The people were better dressed, and looked more Christian than in other Christian towns we had visited, and everywhere we received courtesy and kindness from all to whom we attempted to speak either to ask our way or to exchange a passing salutation. We went into the Latin Convent and saw a crowd of worshippers, for it was Palm Sunday. Outside the church the scene resembled the preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles, the courtyard being full of branches of olive (in lieu of palms, which are very scarce in the land), and everybody bore his own little branch to receive the blessing of the priests.

The Latin Convent is interesting only as "a show," and a place of curious speculation and fable. It is supposed to be the place of the Anunciation, and the home of Mary. A narrow rocky stairway at the back of the altar is shown, and this leads into a cave, which is called the "kitchen of the Virgin Mary." But the

house in which Mary lived is not at Nazareth, as everybody knows. It was miraculously conveyed by angels into Italy, and there, at Loretto, hundreds and thousands piously worship in it every year.

Not to leave unseen any sights which at some future time we might regret not having visited, we duly went to the "Workshop of Joseph," a small plain chapel newly white-washed; the site of the synagogue in which our Lord preached, &c., &c. But we did not walk out to see the spot where they tried to cast Him down headlong, as it is stupidly placed by monkish tradition two miles away from the city, on the road we came up yesterday. Scripture is very clear upon this; the attempt was to cast Him down from the brow of the hill *on which the city was built*, and half a dozen places answering all the requirements of the story may be found close at hand. (Luke iv. 29.)

It was with a feeling of relief we finished the sight-seeing, and made our way to the new English church, a really handsome building, standing in a very commanding position.* The church was scarcely completed when we were there, and it is to be hoped that by-and-bye the acoustical arrangements may be better. They were very bad at that time. Our good Irish clergyman occupied the desk and the pulpit, and it was "a time of refreshing" to hear the story earnestly told again of the first sermon in Nazareth.

* See Chapter XVI.

But I cared less for church and chapel in Palestine than I ever cared for them; every day was a Sabbath, every village a sermon. The real house of God was "the house not made with hands"—the rocks, and hills, and smiling fields; the blue canopy overhead, the incense of flowers, the music of birds, the hum of busy life with which He so freely mingled; the solitary places which He loved to visit—these spoke of Him more distinctly than His servants' words, earnest and genial as they were.

In the afternoon I strolled about upon the hills, and felt that I should like to spend a twelvemonth in Nazareth. It is such a joyously peaceful place; the views are so varied, and some so exquisitely beautiful, one's heart is filled with thankfulness, that He who was to know such depths of sorrow should have passed so much of His time in the midst of these pleasant scenes. It was here He had often considered the lilies, and seen the grass of the field clothed with fresh verdure; here He had known the struggles of daily life, and had watched, too, the fowls of the air which sow not nor reap, but are fed by the heavenly Father; here He grew in wisdom and in stature, and waited God's time—"which of you by taking thought can add one cubit to His stature?"—and here the child passed into the youth, and the youth into the man, until the hour came for Him to accomplish the world's redemption.

There was the burden of one sermon that came to me that day in Nazareth, which I will but give in

epitome here. Whatever else may have been the lessons to be taught by His thirty years sojourn in that mountain village, these are patent. He was there that His perfect manhood might be developed, by education, by toil, by discipline, by sympathy. He was there, in His secluded home, patiently waiting God's time, while the Romans were entering the country and filling its offices; while Roman cities—Tiberias, Cesarea-Philippi, Bethsaida-Julius—were building in Israel's land; while the spirit of enquiry and the cry for education were becoming a mania; while all providences, and circumstances, and instrumentalities were ripening and becoming ready for His appearance, He learned to labour and to wait, earnestly doing His Father's business in the apparently small sphere assigned to Him. Nowhere as at Nazareth do we see Him so completely as our example. Bethlehem is surrounded still with the multitude of the heavenly host; the Sea of Galilee is ringing back the utterances of Him who ruled the raging of the sea, Hermon still bears the glory of the Transfiguration, Bethany speaks of the Resurrection and the Life, Gethsemane is sacred to the sorrow which no merely human heart can ever know, and Jerusalem is echoing from every holy place the saying, "Truly this was the Son of God!" But Nazareth speaks to us emphatically of the One who was made "like unto His brethren," who tasted all the toil, the trial, the suffering, the sympathies of human life, everything common to us, *save sin*. Nazareth tells us

that while we can never imitate Him in those strange eventful scenes at Capernaum, at Bethany, at Gethsemane, or at Calvary, we can imitate Him here; and that to be a good son, a good workman, a good student, a faithful man, is to be Christlike. Do we think less of the divinity of our Master because we are thus brought face to face with His humanity? Nay, we do but tighten our grasp upon that higher truth by more intensely realising the one at hand which is as the lower rail of the ladder. I cannot tell the *force* with which trivial circumstances struck me here. I was hot and tired, hungry and sleepless. I ran a thorn of the prickly pear into my shoulder. *He* had felt all these, or kindred *humanities* in this very place. I was grieved at the trumpery of Popish shows; vexed with some of our party, who were listless and indifferent to the genius of the place. He had mourned in this very town over evil in the professing Church. There was scarcely a circumstance in which I could not feel to a certain extent a kindred feeling to His; and yet there was not a circumstance in which there was not a great gulf set—for He was sinless! I cannot comprehend the idea of sinless humanity since the fall, apart from absolute Deity; and so, while amid these human scenes, my heart rejoiced to say, "Very man of very man," my faith was forced to add, "Very God of very God."

Of all the sights to be seen at Nazareth, nothing is to be compared to the view from a *wely* on the top of a hill behind the town. It almost comprehends all

Palestine. On the south you can see the hills round about Jerusalem ; on the north is Hermon ; on the west is the Great Sea ; and on the east the mountains of Gilead on the other side of Jordan. At a glance you seem to take in the whole land, and the first thought that strikes you is that this must have been a favourite resort of the Saviour, and if so, He must have had constantly spread before Him the great library of biblical story. By degrees you take in the details of the view, and every fresh place which is linked to sacred story does but confirm the impression that He must often have read from this open Book. The view is full of suggestion, and it would be an interesting study to find out the history of all the events which happened at the places within the range of the Saviour's constant view, and to ascertain whether, and if so, in what manner, the influence of these scenes told upon His character and teaching.

I stood long on the top of that *wely*, and having drunk in deeply of its delights, noted down some of the places wholly or partly visible from thence.

Looking to the west we gaze out upon the blue waters of the Mediterranean stretching away in the far distance until they touch the blue sky, the line of the horizon being almost invisible ; that indentation down there is the beautiful Bay of Acre, a place never to be forgotten while the history of the Crusaders, or of the ambition of Napoleon, remain. That ridge which runs along until it stops abruptly in the midst of the sea, is Carmel, the scene of Elijah's victory and

the defeat of the prophets of Baal. The Convent of Carmel, where travellers delight to halt and receive the hospitality of the good Carmelite monks, stands in a commanding position looking down upon the promontory. In a line continuing from the ridge of Carmel southward are the mountains of Samaria, a very fruitful country of hill and valley, with little villages dotted about here and there. Further south still are the hills of Jenin, and in the far distance are the "mountains round about Jerusalem." Turning eastward the view is bounded by the "blue, rugged, and ravined" mountains of Gilead, while below lies the magnificent plain of Esdraelon, covered with its rich green velvety carpet, and threaded with the silver line of "that ancient river, the river Kishon." It is deeply interesting to "run over" the places we have recently visited, and to see them again from where *He* saw them. There is Jezreel, with its solitary tower; there is the barren Mount Gilboa; and Little Hermon, with Nain nestling at its foot. On the sloping ground a little further off is Endor, dark and gloomy. Just immediately below us is the town of Nazareth, rich in gardens, and flowers, and fruitful fields, and plenteous orchards; picturesque with valleys, and hill slopes, and park-like groves of olive, while in pleasant contrast are occasional barren and rocky peaks, or dark ravines. The town itself looks very pretty from here, and all the traditional sites may be easily made out. It is well to accept them for the nonce, as it gives a foundation to the scenes one is constantly picturing

of those days when He went in and out among the people.

Looking again across the town to the north-east, Tabor stands conspicuous, dotted with trees from base to summit. But the glory of the whole view culminates as you turn northward, and behold a great wall of white crystal standing out against the blue sky, and sparkling with a myriad diamonds in the blaze of the afternoon sun. It is Hermon, the grandest thing in Palestine. And there in the foreground are the "hills of Galilee," sacred with holy memories ; somewhere amongst them lies embosomed the Lake of Gennesareth, and everywhere round about that region the scenery is varied, picturesque and sug-

hills, valleys ; ocean, coast, rocks, and snowy mountains, all unite to make the scene one that deserves to be described as wonderful and sublime.

In the afternoon we were visited in our tents by some of the Nazarenes ; in the evening one of our clericals preached a splendid sermon in the grand saloon of our encampment, from the words, "He shall be called a Nazarene," and at night I strolled out in the moonlight upon the hills, and looked down upon the sleeping town wrapped in the silvery light, and so closed one of the most restful happy days it was ever my good lot to spend.





XIII.—THE LAKE OF GALILEE.

BIDDING farewell to Nazareth early in the morning, we ascended a hill to the north of the town, and found ourselves in a very bad road again, as usual; steep, and with large patches of smooth slippery rocks, over which the horses had to hold themselves together with great care. One is constantly reminded in such places of Scriptures such as these—"My feet had well-nigh slipped," "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe," and a variety of others, evidently suggested by some of the dangerous hill journeys performed in that land. We passed a little village named Reineh, without any historical associations connected with it, as far as I know, and with nothing to attract attention save a group of horses drinking water out of an old sarcophagus, richly ornamented, which stands by the wayside, and is used as the common water trough of the village.

Descending from here we came to another village, unattractive in appearance, but suggestive in name and glorious in association, if it be the place that some suppose. It is called Kefr Kenna, and many claim it to be Cana of Galilee, the scene of our Lord's first

miracle. From the hill at the back of Nazareth we had looked down on the previous day on a rival Cana—Kâna-el-Jelîl—a further distance from Nazareth in a directly opposite direction. Without entering here into the respective merits of the rival Canas, I may mention that Mr Zelleh, the esteemed missionary of Nazareth, accompanied us to Kefr Kenna, and gave us some cogent arguments in favour of his view of the case, that this is the veritable scene of our Lord's first miracle.*

Of course they have the actual house on show here where the miracle was performed, and we rode round it; but we did not feel justified in squandering Backsheesh to see the stone water-pots. I have seen several of them in Romish cathedrals in Europe. It is wonderful how these things have increased and multiplied. But we did stop to look at some olive-trees on a hill-side close by; real curiosities they were, and of such great age that it is highly probable they were standing there in Christ's day.

It was disappointing in that place, where the Saviour sanctified home-life and home-joy, to find a dirty village of tumble-down houses and a ragged population, but in that He did that gracious act in Cana He did it wherever there is a home, as when He spoke to one of the disciples He spoke to every disciple through all time.

We saw nothing more of great interest (except a

* See a capital paper, by Rev. J. Zelleh, in "Quarterly Statement, No. 3 (Oct. 1869), Palestine Exploration Fund."

wely on the top of a hill, said to be the tomb of the prophet Jonah) until we came to a curious hill on our left, having on its summit two projecting knobs, or horns, from which circumstance it is called Kurdn Hattin, or the Horns of Hattin. Two sets of association, widely differing, cluster around this spot, either of which would be sufficient to make it a place of great interest to every traveller. The first, and infinitely more important, is that this is none other than the Mount of Beatitudes—the scene of our blessed Lord's sermon on the Mount. The second is that here the Crusaders met with their most disastrous defeat at the hands of Saladin, notwithstanding the fact that they had the true cross with them. A passage from Stanley, who has carefully examined the evidence for this being the Mount of Beatitudes will be interesting here, while an extract from Porter will graphically tell the story of the Crusaders' defeat.

Stanley says: "This mountain, or hill, for it only rises sixty feet above the plain, is that known to pilgrims as the Mount of Beatitudes. The tradition cannot lay claim to any early date; it was in all probability suggested first to the Crusaders by its remarkable situation. But that situation so strikingly coincides with the intimations of the Gospel narrative, as almost to force the inference that in this instance the eye of those who selected the spot was for once rightly guided. It is the only height seen in this direction from the shores of the Lake of Gennesareth.

The plain on which it stands is easily accessible from the lake, and from that plain to the summit is but a few minutes' walk. The platform at the top is evidently suitable for the collection of a multitude, and corresponds precisely to the 'level place' * to which He would 'come down,' as from one of its higher horns, to address the people. Its situation is central, both to the peasants of the Galilean hills and the fishermen of the Galilean lake, between which it stands; and would therefore be a natural resort, both 'to Jesus and His disciples,' when they retired for solitude from the shore of the sea, and also to the crowds who assembled 'from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judea, and from beyond Jordan.'"

Porter says: "On this irregular plateau, between the Kurûn and Lûbich, was fought, on the 5th July 1187, the Battle of Hattîn, which sealed the fate of the Crusades. The flower of the Christian army assembled on the one side, with the King of Jerusalem at their head; and the vast hordes of the Mahommedans on the other, led by Saladin. The immediate cause of the conflict was a gross infraction of a truce by Raynald of Châtillon, lord of Kerak, who plundered a Damascus caravan, and refused to give up either merchants or merchandise on the demand of the Sultan. Saladin was stung to madness, alike by the perfidy and insolence of the petty Christian chief; and he swore a solemn oath to put him to

* Luke vi. 17, mistranslated "plain."

death with his own hand should he ever fall into his power. Great preparations were made on both sides. The Crusaders' gathering-place was the fountain of Sefûrieh. The Muslims swept round the northern end of the Lake of Tiberias; their horsemen, in the usual Arab style, laying waste the country with fire and sword. Saladin, having seized Tiberias, took up his position on the heights above it, with the intention of drawing the Christian army from their strong position to a general engagement. In this he was successful. The weak-minded king marched to the plateau of Hattin; and there, after an exhausting journey, without water, and constantly exposed to the assaults of an active foe, he foolishly gave orders to encamp. The night was a dreadful one, and it was followed by a morrow still more dreadful. With the dawn the battle commenced. The Christians were hemmed in on every side. The active Arabs, evading the charge of the heavily-armed knights, galled them from a distance with flights of arrows and javelins. But heat, thirst, and exhaustion were more fatal than the weapons of the foe. A few knights cut their way through, and fled to 'Akka; and the shattered remnant, rallying round the king and the 'holy cross,' withdrew to the summit of Tel Hattin. Again and again they drove their assailants from the heights. It was in vain. The bravest fell fighting; and the few who survived were made prisoners. Amongst these were the king, the grand master of the Templars, and *Rannald of Chatillon*.

"After the conflict the captive princes were brought to the tent of the conqueror. He received them with the respect due to their rank and their misfortunes. On Raynald alone he bent a look of mingled rage and scorn, and ordered him to be put to death. The victory of Hattin was decisive. The Crusaders were almost annihilated; and nearly all Palestine, with Jerusalem itself, soon yielded to the Muslem yoke."*

A long ridge of hills is before us, beautifully level, our horses are in good spirits and game for a gallop, so off we start in merry cue, while the cool breeze exhilarates and refreshes us. But presently we come to a dead halt, for a scene bursts upon the view, which, of its kind, is unrivalled in Palestine. It is the Sea of Galilee, lying a thousand feet below us in its cradle of hills, with Hermon like a guardian angel watching over it.

I should be sorry to imply that I have never seen a finer lake than Gennesareth, or that I have never seen a lake with more beautiful surroundings, for I have, many times. But this I say, that no lake ever impressed me with such a rapturous feeling of delight—no doubt this was mainly from its associations, for every moment the present would bury itself in the past. What though there be a lack of vegetation, and the hills are too rounded to make the scene exquisite? The water is a deep and beautiful blue, the hills are toned and tinted with every variety of colour, and

* "*Handbook to Syria and Palestine.*"

look very much like the heathery hills in the Highlands of Scotland, while a few fleeting clouds throw deep shadows and reliefs, and make very charming effects. But one thinks little of these things as they are—imagination immediately builds cities in the valleys running down to the shore, plants the vine and the fig in terraces all over those sloping hills; scatters flocks and herds upon the downs, and makes the water gay with a fleet of fishermen's boats.

From the height we are on we can see the whole Lake from beyond Tiberias on the south to Capernaum on the north, with every hill along the coast, some 2000 feet high, and all sloping down to the lake, which is remarkable for its depression, being 600 or 700 feet below the Mediterranean. The lake is $12\frac{1}{4}$ miles long by $6\frac{3}{4}$ broad.

Those are moments full of intense life which one spends in contemplating the first view of the Sea of Galilee. The places which He consecrated by His presence are all around us. On these hills He prayed, over there He sat and taught, on these shores He preached to eager crowds, on those blue waters He walked; there was the home of His chosen followers, there used to ply the fishing boats of John and Peter, in one of which he slept in the hinder part, upon a pillow, while the furious tempest raged, lashed up in a moment by the boisterous wind sweeping down the "funnel" made by yonder hills. Everywhere the gospel is written upon this divinely illumi-

nated page of Nature, and the very air seems full of the echo of His words.

The descent to Tiberias is very steep. Many of our party dismounted and walked, but it is safer to trust to the horses. The cool mountain breeze is soon exchanged as we descend to the most oppressive heat, reminding us of the valley of the Jordan. Not a leaf stirs; vegetation is altered into a tropical kind, and even the people seem different from those we have met with before.

We enter Tiberias by the old ruined gate of the wall—the wall has been rent and torn by earthquake, but the course of it can be everywhere distinctly traced, and some of the towers are almost perfect. We stroll through the town, which is anything but sweet and clean. It has a population of about 2000, and half of them are Jews, miserable looking creatures, pale, not very Jewish in appearance, and all with long curls, and dressed in light coloured coats down to the ankle, edged with fur. Half a dozen old clo' men may be met with in a stroll through Hounsdlitch who would furnish the characteristics of the typical Jew far better than any of these men of Tiberias. Very little romance gathers round the present race of Jews in Palestine. With the exception of one or two at Jerusalem and Hebron, I did not see any in the land that sufficiently inspired interest to look at them twice, or that drew from me, for their appearance sake, any great feeling of respectful pity or sympathy.

There is little to interest in the town of Tiberias—very few relics of the past having been preserved, and not a single building of the time of Herod remaining. Moreover, in the record of the gospels it is never stated that our Lord ever visited Tiberias. Most probably He did, certainly He must have seen the city over and over again; but we are so near to places where we can positively say He rowed, He sat, He talked, that we care not to linger here, however fruitful the place might turn out to be in memories of Imperial Rome. What was Rome with all its glory compared with that spot at the head of the lake which we see in the distance, and marks the site where Capernaum once stood?

When we arrived at Tiberias we were disappointed not to see any boats there, but our dragomans had gone in search of them, for nothing in the world would satisfy some of us, but to row to Capernaum. By the time we had finished our explorations in the town, and had luncheoned, and gathered our bags of shells from the shore, we were rejoiced to see the boats coming up under the wall which edges on the lake.

The boats were very dirty, had an ugly build, and carried the ordinary sail used by small craft in the Mediterranean. And yet I never looked on boats with deeper interest. There were four "sailors" to each boat, handsome strong-built merry-faced Arabs, who looked upon our invasion of their fishing boats as a good bit of fun, and could not make out the

enthusiasm of some of our friends over little details which never troubled them. It was tight work to get thirteen passengers into each boat, and it was hard work to make any way with the craft, for "the wind was contrary" (what little there was of it), and as it was impossible to use the sails, some of us "turned to," and for three or four hours we were "toiling in rowing." It was poor rowing, however. The oars were heavy and awkward, there were no footboards, the rowlocks were very rough and stupid, with a constant tendency to hitch, and the heat was terrific. Notwithstanding, I would not have resigned my oar for a trifle. It does not fall to one's lot every day to *realise* so much as a row on the Lake of Galilee can yield. But oh! how one pined to know more of the secrets locked up in those bays and shores and valleys of Gennesareth; what thrilling stories of wondrous love these barren and ruinous places could tell; What wondrous words of sympathy those hill sides have heard; what unrecorded chapters of mystery and revelation might have been added to the specimens given us in the gospels of our Lord's laborious life in this neighbourhood.

There is much to see as we go along. Almost opposite Tiberias is Gamala; the story of its resistance and fall, and of the horrid butchery that followed, are well told in Milman's History of the Jews.* It was the last citadel attacked by Vespasian and Titus,

* Vol. ii. p. 286.

before the siege of Jerusalem. Travellers tell us that to-day the place is to be found much as it was left by the conquerors, and that there is an interesting field here for the archæologist; but we had no time to explore. On the same shore, and not far from Gamala, is Wady Fik; the village is celebrated as the Aphek, where Benhadad fled after his defeat, and where the strange accident of Scripture occurred—"a wall fell upon 27,000 of his men that were left, and slew them." *

But those places on the western shore are five or six miles off; let us look to the left.

We have the Horns of Hattin, and the broad plain below it; and then we see a curious little village which is called Mejdal, and is doubtless the same as Magdala, the city of Mary Magdalene. After the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus "sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala."

This is the widest part of the lake. Almost opposite Magdala, a steep hill running down into the sea, is pointed out to us. The native name of the place is Khersa, and it has been identified by some with Gergasa. The grounds of identification are the similarity in name (a very influential clue all through the land) and the configuration of the country. It is the only place, according to some, which corresponds to the story of the devils entering into the swine, and

running violently down a steep place, so that they perished in the sea. (Matt. viii. 32). Several other places, however, can be pointed out which would meet all the requirements of the story.

Looking again to the left, we have the Land of Gennesareth, stretching for three miles or so, and bounded by mounds and hills; every part of this plain must have been familiar to the Saviour (Matt. xiv. 34), and many of those who were miraculously cured by the Good Physician, dwelt here. Right ahead are the bushes and trees surrounding Capernaum.

We had no time to examine and explore these places; none of our party were scientific; probably we should not have advanced one stage beyond the disputants, who had gone before us, had we tarried ever so long—but we could drink in impressions and enjoy the panorama passing before us, and every one did this to the full, according to the bent of his own inclination. Some amused themselves by explaining the mechanism of a watch to the delighted Arabs, or teaching them to sketch parts of the boat; and all were amused when one of the pupils had correctly copied one of the advertisements from the back of Murray's guide. Some read and toiled over maps and books, always a wearisome job in a blazing sun; but, perhaps, those fared best who stuck to the oars, or lolled upon the gunwale, and *thought*.

When the keel of the boat ran upon the shore, and we saw our tents under the shadow of a great rock,

we were as eager to bound ashore as we had been to enter the boat, for we were landing upon the holiest ground of Galilee.

And here let me relieve the mind of the reader by stating frankly that I have not the vestige of a new idea to offer about these disputed localities at the northern end of the lake. That Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Chorazin were here, I have no doubt whatever—and the testimony of all the best authorities is in agreement with this general fact, but which was one, and which was the other, has been the subject of endless controversy.

Let me briefly describe the places as I saw them, and leave all speculation to those who care to indulge in it.

We were encamped at 'Ain el Tin, in the midst of a tangled maze of brushwood, surrounded by a wilderness of thistles. Close beside us is a high cliff, and at its foot, a spring of water. The pond around it is clear, abounding with fish, and maiden hair ferns grow in profusion between the rocks. A large fig tree makes a beautiful shade, and we find that some of our friends have already taken up their quarters there, eager to catch a fish or two. I wander along alone, making my way to a mound about four hundred yards off, and on this I stand, wondering what secrets are hidden beneath my feet, and looking right away over the brushwood, to Magdala and the Land of Gennesareth, at the northern end of which 'Ain el Tin stands. Part of the plain is under cultivation, but there are

ten acres of thistle to one of corn, I should think. I strolled through the thistles towards Magdala, hoping to find some open space on the shore, but thick impenetrable brushwood and clumps of *nubk* made it almost impossible—and the heat was stifling.

Turning back to the tents, and crossing an undulating waste of jungle, I came upon the skeleton of a man and a camel, with an old crusted iron chain between them. They lay almost as they must have perished, a curious circumstance, as jackals abound, and I had seen one even in broad daylight.

Well, this place, 'Ain el Tin, is thought by many to be the site of Capernaum, and the principal argument is that it is immediately connected with the Land of Gennesareth.

But come now up the cliff (it is not a difficult climb), and look out right along the Lake. It is a lovely view, and one that we shall return to again and again. What interests us now is to see, on the top of this cliff, a road cut in the solid rock. But recent investigation has decided it is not a road, but the remains of a gigantic aqueduct; and Captain Wilson thinks this carried the water from the fountain mentioned by Josephus, which irrigated the plain of Gennesareth. Where that fountain was, is the great question to decide. It might have been that at 'Ain el Tin; it might have been at 'Ain Tabighah (Tiberias), which is just round this headland over which the aqueduct passes; or it might have been at Tel Hûm, where we shall arrive by and by. Continue the road

for the present, and see before you a glorious piece of level sea shore, small pebbles and sand,—forming a charming bay, with cliffs at either end, and hills gradually rising at the back. This was probably Bethsaida. It is only half a mile from 'Ain el Tin, but it is completely cut off on the shore by the headland.

A mile and a half to two miles further on, and near to where the Jordan enters the Lake, is Tel Hûm. Captain Wilson is strong upon this place as being the site of Capernaum ; he identifies it by the derivation of its name, by its having a fountain near to it, corresponding to that mentioned by Josephus, and by the ruins of a building which was evidently a synagogue,—perhaps the very one built by the centurion, whose servant was healed by the Saviour, and of whom it was said, " He loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." (Luke xii. 5.) But how does this theory of Tel Hûm being Capernaum affect the argument of many that Tel Hûm was Chorazin ? Of course it throws it over, and Captain Wilson tells us that, after ages of controversy, the matter is settled ; Chorazin was two miles from Tel Hûm, and is to be identified, beyond doubt, with Kerazeh, notwithstanding the fact that it is a couple of miles from the shore, and Jerome, no mean authority, described it as upon the shore.

But why endeavour to find the exact spots. There is something almost sublime about the uncertainty ; and as we wander in places where heaps of rubbish and broken columns and fragments of old walls, mark

the spots where cities once stood, which witnessed His "mighty works," and were exalted to heaven, we seem to hear the wail of the "Burden of Galilee." Woe unto thee Capernaum, woe unto thee Bethsaida, woe unto thee Chorazin!

Next morning was to be a holiday, and Frank said, "I go a-fishing," so Edwin and I could not but add, "We also go with thee." An Arab supplied us with some monstrous hooks, and from the remains of an old hut, we found sticks which served for fishing rods. Our costumes consisted of trousers and shirts, and a huck-aback towel over head and shoulders, for the morning was fearfully hot. We wandered out by Bethsaida, and found stepping stones into deepish water, where we could see hundreds of good sized fish—probably they also saw us, for they sported round the bait, and pretended either to be too warm to eat, or not hungry. At all events, we toiled all the morning and caught nothing. Stay, the statement is scarcely correct; we caught glimpses of crowds upon the sea shore, of a table spread in the wilderness, of fishermen mending their nets, of a fish coming ashore, in which was found the tribute money "for me and for thee," as He so lovingly said. Every picture the memory drew, was set in the very same framework in which the facts occurred. The little boat that brought us yesterday from Tiberias, was lying over there, close in to the shore. It was a wonderful help to picture-making. That solitary man picking up shells on the shore towards Magdala, helped us to see the form of

One, who, in the grey of the dawn, stood on the shore, and called to the men in the boat, "Children, have you any meat." That Arab boy, climbing hand over hand up that steep bit of hill, and jumping from boulder to boulder, forces one's thoughts upon Simon Peter, the daring boy, whose activity and courage had been the subject of many a twilight chat in the village of Bethsaida. Everywhere the gospel story is to be seen and heard, and as our thoughts rest in grateful tenderness upon Him whose blessed feet so often trod this strand, we can say, "we have not followed cunningly devised fables."

We bathed, and strolled, and learned from two Arabs how to catch fish with a gun, by shooting small stones at them ; and in the afternoon, sat in the shade of our tent doors, and wrote and chatted. It was such a relief not to find any "show places" here ; if Jerusalem had only been left as Capernaum has, without one stone upon another, there would have been much more to learn and to *feel*, than there is now with its distracting multitude of curiosities.

Never will the night that closed that delightful day in the environs of "His own city," be forgotten by me. It was brilliantly moonlight, and standing upon the cliff above our camping place, the white houses of Tiberias were distinctly visible. The waters of the lake lay calm and placid as when He said, "Peace be still—and there was a great calm." The inequalities and want of colouring on the hills which had been noticeable in the broad sunshine, were not perceptible

now ; around us were the "desert places," and the "mountain tops," which had been the scene of His resting and His prayers. Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin,—mounds of rubbish, tangles of thistles, heaps of ruins; they have been "cast down," and have passed away. But the "mighty works" remain still powerful in blessing, and the "gracious words" are as fresh, as beautiful, and as life-giving to-day, as when He uttered them.

Thank God we worship not the Christ that *was*, but the ever-living, ever-present One who is to-day opening the blind eyes to see His beauty ; and unstopping the deaf ears to hear His words ; and is leading the halt and lame into the way of His commandments, and saying to the tempest raging round His disciples, "Peace be still." Thank God, too, for the "specimens" given in Capernaum of the "greater things than these," performed in every village and city where the good tidings have been sent.

Will the New Zealander ever sit beside the fragments of London Bridge, and sketch the ruins of St Paul's? If so, will it not be for the same reason that these cities of Galilee lie waste, and because the cry will have gone forth, "Woe unto thee, England, for if the mighty works that have been done in thee, had been done in China and India, they would have repented long ago sitting in sackcloth and ashes."



XIV.—FROM GALILEE TO DAMASCUS.

CÆSAREA PHILIPPI.

or Hûleh, and the lake is called in the Scriptures, "The waters of Merom." It was here that Jabin, king of Hazor, a city on a hill further north, gathered together all the surrounding kings and their companies, "and they went out, they and all their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand is on the sea-shore in multitude, with horses and chariots, very many. And when all those kings were met together, they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel. And the Lord said unto Joshua, Be not afraid because of them; for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up all slain before Israel, thou shalt hough their horses and burn their chariots with fire. So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them by the waters of Merom suddenly; and they fell upon them, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Israel." Josh. xi. 1-15.*

One of our party who had carried a rifle all through Palestine, and had shot nothing, was here rewarded for his zeal by bringing down a tremendous stork, and nearly securing a pelican.

We lunched at 'Ain-Mellâhah, a beautiful resting-place—a land of springs and fountains, where an old mill affords a tempting shade, and a fine opportunity for gathering ferns. Here we bathed, and sauntered, and watched innumerable birds wheeling round the

* For a good account of the battle, see Stanley's "Sinai and Palestine;" and for the scenery and productions of the lake and district, "The Rob Roy on the Jordan."

lake; and made a most delightful pic-nic. Near to us, but not visible, is Kadesh, in Mount Naphtali; it once belonged to the family of Gershom, and was a city of refuge the most northerly of the seven.

We were only "in" for a quiet day's work, and when, in the afternoon, we mounted again, an hour's journey brought us to another of the waters of Merom, a charming place, but close to a swamp, all alive with mud turtles, and myriads of frogs. These said frogs commenced a high choral festival as soon as the sun went down, and continued it until the sun rose again. We protested against camping in such a place, for it is famous for malaria, and we all expected to get fever and ague, and other infirmities—but we did not.

It was a lovely sight to see the sun set, flooding the plain with gorgeous colours, and making that great mountain Hermon blaze with golden hues.

Next morning we found our tents wringing wet, and the ground all sparkling with the "dew of Hermon." The temperature was much cooler than we had felt it for some time past, and this gave great animation to us all, and made a canter very enjoyable. But it seemed a shame to hurry past the exquisite scenery through which our course lay. Everywhere there was cultivation, the flowers scented the air most deliciously, many of them quite new to us. Many large trees were in full blossom, one like the *Seringa*, and with as delicious a perfume, and one like the *ribes*, our English flowering currant; while the hills of

Bashan on our left, and the snows of Hermon right above us gave an air of grandeur and beauty which we have not seen anywhere before in Syria.

Presently we came to a curious little hill, like an inverted basin, with a pool of water beside it, and one or two fine old trees overhanging the water. It is called Tell-el-Kady, or "The Judge's Mound," and is the Laish of the Phœnicians or the Dan of Scripture. The lake is the source of the Jordan, and the guide-book says,—“It is probably the largest fountain in Syria, and among the largest in the world.” But had it not said so, I should not have credited the fact, as it has anything but an imposing appearance. Nor is this, as was once supposed, *the* source of the Jordan; we shall find that the true source is further north, near to Cesarea Philippi. The mound has been supposed by some to be an extinct crater, by others to be of artificial formation.

A cluster of memories gather around it. Here Abraham pursued the captors of Lot “even unto Dan,” and with his handful of men recovered him and the booty. (Gen. xiv. 14).

It was the most northerly city of Palestine, as Beersheba was the most southerly, and the expression, “from Dan to Beersheba” is known to all, both in its literal and metaphorical sense.

It was inhabited by Zidonians, but the Danites “sought them an inheritance to dwell in,” and five men sent “to spy out the land, and to search it,” chanced to light upon this snug place, and reported,

"We have seen the land, and behold it is very good. Be not slothful to go and to enter to possess the land. When ye go ye shall come unto a people secure, and into a large land—a place where there is no want of anything in the earth." (Judg. xviii. 9). So six hundred Danites went up from the south towards Laish, and on their way they stopped at the house of Micah the free-thinker, stole his gods, took away his priest, and then came to Laish, where they found a people, quiet and secure. They slew them all, and then set up the graven image which Micah had made, and established themselves upon this hill, which they called Dan, after the name of their father. Later on, this place became the scene of more idolatrous worship. Here it was that Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves—the other being at Bethel—as a substitute for the religion of their fathers, forsaken when the kingdom was separated. (1 Kings xii. 28). The spot where the image was set up is said to be at the south-west corner of the mound.

There is a splendid view from the Tell, and we look wistfully over the "well watered plain" of Hooleh, towards the hills of Galilee, for we are soon about to leave Palestine—Dan being really its northern boundary. But we have yet more "Holy Ground" to tread, for an hour's ride will bring us to Cesarea Philippi, where the Master had taught and toiled, and where, on the Holy Mount, He "received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory,

‘This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.’”
(2 Pet. i. 17).

From Dan to Banias we pass through a wonderfully beautiful forest of the Oaks of Bashan. In some places the turf is level and mossy, and it seems we are in a well kept park. We linger to gather flowers, which hang in profuse clusters from the trees, and the notes of birds, the rippling of waters, the sweet odour of flowers, make a very fairy land. And beside the quiet beauty, we look through the trees, and see great Hermon towering up to Heaven. So on and on, exhausting all the adjectives which ordinarily express delight, until we reach the terraced land on which Banias and the ruins of Cæsarea Philippi stand.

Our camping place was beside a rapid babbling brook, flowing from Jordan’s source ; a fine grove of olives made a cool and shady canopy, while a level piece of ground was spread with a rich green carpet of grass. A hasty luncheon, and then we set out to explore.

We discovered a few dwellings, some of which we entered, and found them very destitute of comfort. One shop seemed to monopolise all the trade of the town, and was filled with a multitude of dirty things, rough tobacco for Narghillis, in damp rotten sacks ; figs, dried, and lying in heaps on the filthy floor, where a couple of hens were taking their ease. We crossed a rough bridge over the Jordan, made of antique pillars, minus their capitals ; parts of the old citadel are remaining, and everywhere there are

traces of former grandeur. In the old sheikh's residence—which is thoroughly Oriental, except that it is scrupulously clean—there are some large stones and an old window remaining, and one or two very old pillars are built up into the modern dwelling. We went on the roof of several of the houses in the village, the people willingly receiving us. On the roof of nearly every house there is a booth made of green branches, and raised upon stout pedestals of wood. This is the summer sleeping place, and is designed to raise them above the scorpions, lizards, and other vermin, which swarm in the neighbourhood.

And this is all that remains of what was once, probably, the "Baal Gad in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon," the furthest point north to which the conquests of Joshua extended (Josh. xi. 17). It was called Paneas by the Greeks. Josephus calls it Panium; in the time of Our Lord it was called by the Romans Cæsarea Philippi, and now it bears the name of Banias.

The interest in the place is now focussed into one spot. We have before us a high cliff; on it there are inscriptions in Greek, and niches where statues once stood; at the foot of the rock there is a large and lofty cavern, and just outside is the clear, fresh, sparkling spring—the source of the Jordan. In this grotto great Pan was worshipped, and thus the name Paneas. Here Herod reared a temple which was dedicated to Cæsar. And here probably stood our Saviour with His disciples when, in reply to His question "Whom

do men say that I the Son of Man am?" Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." And perhaps it was as he looked upon this rocky cliff, which had been the seat of worship for milleniums, He said, "Thou are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. xvi. 16-19). "Inscribe this sentence over St Peter's or over St Paul's, the fact remains, that upon the foundation of this confession of Christ's humanity and divinity, the church has been built." But this is verging upon the controversial, and as we stand here looking at that cavern, we would rather think of Him than of the controversies about Him.

Look up, now, at the high mountain before us; it is Hermon, and Panium is but a portion of it. It stands "apart;" is it, as many think, the scene of the Transfiguration? or was it higher up in those solitudes, commanding the grandest views in Palestine? We cannot tell, we only know it was somewhere here; we should like to know the actual spot, but the knowledge would not add one whit to the glorious fact. Look up higher still into those blue heavens, and let faith see Him in the excellent glory, dwelling in the light which no *man* hath seen nor can see, crowned and exalted a Prince and a Saviour.

Overlooking Cæsarea Philippi is a ruined castle on the top of a high hill, which stands out from the hills round about almost as conspicuously as does Tabor from the Galilean hills. Murray has this enthusiastic

passage about it: "The Castle of Subeibeh, generally known as the Castle of Baniâs, is one of the finest ruins in Syria, and one of the most perfect and imposing specimens of the military architecture of the Phœnicians, or possibly of the Syro-Grecians, extant. No traveller should fail to visit it. It is an hour's ride from Baniâs." Frank and Edwin had resolved to go, and I could not reconcile my desire to see the ruins with my state of body consequent upon an unusually hearty luncheon (we were always hungry in Palestine), and an unusually hot afternoon. But "no traveller should fail to visit it," and this decided me. But we went on foot, and lost the usual track, and scrambled up over rocks and crumbling dust, and avalanches of stones, for a thousand feet, and decided upon vote that it would be easier to go twice up the Great Pyramid than once up to Subeibeh. And when we reached the top we had to scale walls, jump chasms, penetrate into gloomy vaults, and climb forbidding ramparts; so that the expedition involved the severest work we had in Palestine.

It is a magnificent ruin and of vast extent, covering an area of 1000 feet in length, and 200 feet in breadth. How those mighty stones, ten and twelve feet long, were brought there, and how those mammoth works were reared on the summit of a hill a thousand feet high, and cut off from everywhere, is a marvel. Arches, windows, cisterns, round towers, keeps, and vaulted chambers remain in fine preservation, and make one wonder more and more at the industry and

skill of by-gone ages. I would not advise anybody who has not a cool head and a steady eye, to stand upon the wall and look into the awful precipice, going sheer down for 800 to 900 feet into the wild and desolate valley! But the views around are magnificent, endless tiers of hills, the hills of Bashan, the hills of Galilee, the slopes of Hermon; the great plain of Huléh with its many waters, and right below the village of Banias. As to the history of the castle little can be said with authority. Captain Wilson thinks it cannot date earlier than the eighth or ninth century A.D., while Dr Porter and others claim for it a much higher antiquity. In 1130 it fell into the hands of the Crusaders, in 1165 it fell into the hands of the Muslems, and now it has fallen into complete ruin.

The descent was as bad as the getting up, and when we reached the source of the Jordan, we drank with desperation and regardless of consequences, for we had not had a drop of water since starting, and had been tongue-sore with thirst.

Next day we started off early, and took to the hills almost immediately after leaving Cæsarea Philippi, passing first of all within a short distance of the Castle of Subeibeh, and with our field glasses, as we looked down upon it, seeing almost as much as we had done in our tiresome journey. Then up and up, through wild and rugged country, ridge after ridge, until we had ascended 4500 feet above the sea level, and had crossed the great chain of Hermon. Then

down, down, sometimes past oases of beauty in the wilderness of desolation; once in a gorge which was a mighty rift in the mountains, wild and grand in the extreme, until at last we halted in a rocky valley not far from Beit Jenn, the burning sun right overhead, not a yard of shade to be seen except in the clefts of the rocks, and at our feet a rapid, bubbling, and merrily-musical river—the Pharpar!

In the afternoon, as we neared the village of Kefr-Hauwar, which was to be our camping place for the night, an unusual noise and commotion seemed going on—cries, and shrieks, and howlings blending together. In a moment the dragomans saw there was something wrong, and away they dashed at full tilt; my horse was unceremoniously demanded by one of the attendants, who was armed, and I was left with a mule. All spurred on to the scene of action, and a strange scene it was. The villagers were on the housetops, hurling down stones and other missiles on our muleteers, who, with sticks and staves, old sabres, and the cook, with his carving knife, were charging on them, while cries of "Timoleon to the rescue!" "Alexander to the rescue!" rang from some of our more adventurous tourists. There was a wild skirmish. Alexander and Timoleon rode their horses over the housetops, which formed a terrace above terrace on the hill-side, and fired their pistols and blunderbusses. This drove the belligerents down, and then in the plain there was a battle with sticks, and hatchets, and carving-knives, accompanied by a

running fire of stones ; but at this crisis our forty odd tourists were all at the spot ready to assist, and a shout from our muleteers announced that Timoleon and Khalil had secured the leader of the riot.

So the battle ended. The prisoner was an oldish man, with a wild uncanny look in his flashing eye ; and he had a ghastly wound in his arm from a sabre stroke, but he seemed not to regard it. While preparation was being made for his trial, the women of the village came to us wailing bitterly, falling on the ground to kiss our feet, or the hem of our garments. They were pleading for mercy, and the scene was one that illustrated Eastern manners and customs more than any I had ever seen.

The trial was on this wise. A carpet was spread, pipes and coffee were introduced, Timoleon and Alexander, with Mr Cook and the sheikh of the village—who had done everything to quell the disturbance—constituted themselves judge and jury ; and after a great deal of talky-talky, in a most placid style at first, and more excitable in process of time, certain pains and penalties were inflicted, and hostilities ceased.

And what was it all about ? the reader will naturally ask. I really hardly know. Some said one thing and some another. One version of the story was that the villagers objected to Christians camping beside their village, as plague, pestilence, or famine always accompanied the visits of such infidels ; and so, when they saw our unusually extensive encampment, they

determined to prevent the muleteers—who had gone in advance of us—from pitching there.

The other version was that one of our donkeys had been faring sumptuously in one of their corn-fields, and that our men declined to call the ass away.

But there have been many more important battles which have been much more difficult to trace from the beginning. I need not say it was a time of great excitement for us all, and everybody who had any defensive weapon carefully looked it out, and had it ready to hand in case there should be a night attack. But all passed off quietly, and in the morning many of us paid a visit to the village, and were treated with

unwell, or met with any slight accident, they were sure to bring him to me.

I always had a great respect for medical missions. Preaching the Gospel and healing all manner of diseases went together in the ministry of Christ and of His apostles; and we do well when we send forth missionaries who, like the Master Himself, minister to the diseases of the soul and of the body. The gift of miracles belongs not now to the Church, as it once did; but the nearest approach to it is the marvellous work of modern medical science. I had no conception of the *power* its most trivial application has among the Arabs, who have but one remedy for everything—namely, to bleed the patient, and wait to see whether he will recover or die—until this incident occurred; and when in Damascus I mentioned the circumstance to a clergyman, he said to me, producing at the same time a Bible from one pocket and a case of instruments and medicine from another, “I never travel now without these; for though I have laboured for many years in the East, I have never, that I am aware of, been successful in conveying true spiritual blessing to any one person unless I have been able to prove that while caring for their souls I have also a care for their bodies.”

Next morning, as we were on our way to Damascus, we had to encounter almost as severe a storm of wind and rain as that described on leaving Jerusalem. For some hours we kept on over a bleak desert in the drenching rain, until we came to a spot where we

joined the old Roman road leading to Damascus, from Egypt and Palestine. The scenery about here is very fine, our guide books tell us, but we saw very little of it for the storm; however, we could not pass this spot without pausing to think of the ever memorable scene which tradition has located here—the Conversion of St Paul. There is no good reason to doubt that this was the spot—if it was not exactly at this very place, it was probably close handy, upon the road from Jerusalem. "And as he journeyed, he came near to Damascus, and suddenly there shone round about him a light from heaven, and he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 3, 4).

Soon after passing this spot, the sun burst out, and we had one of those electrifying views, which stamp themselves on the memory for ever. The great ridge of Anti-Lebanon, the huge wall of Hermon looking quite a different mountain from that we were accustomed to see in the south; hills and undulations, with occasional villages and a profusion of vegetation, and ahead, rising out of a wilderness of beauty, the domes and towers and minarets of Damascus.

But it seemed in that clear shining after rain, quite near to us, whereas, after some hours in the saddle, without a halt, we found every mile we advanced as if we were not an inch nearer, and so, as a fresh storm was brewing, we put up at a populous village, and spread our luncheon in the house of one of the well-to-do people, who received us very kindly.

An hour after this, we were passing through those wondrous groves and gardens for which Damascus is so famous, and beside those waters of Abana and Pharpar which certainly seem to be better than all the waters of Israel.

The place at which we had intended to camp was up to the horses' girths in water ; and so we made the best of our way to the world-famed Demetri's Hotel, glad enough to think that these comfortable quarters would be our home for the next few days.





XV.—DAMASCUS—BEYROUT.

DAMASCUS was a flourishing city in the childhood of the world, it is a flourishing city still. Before the pyramids were laid, before Jerusalem was built, before Israel was a nation ; while yet Baalbec and Thebes were not, Damascus was a city.

It would be quite beside the mark for me to attempt to give anything like a history of Damascus, or even to touch upon the startling events that, in the history of the ages, have made it famous or infamous. I must content myself with a brief description of "what there is to be seen," and shall confine my remarks almost exclusively to the Damascus of to-day.

Come first with me into Demetri's Hotel—that seems common-place enough, but Demetri is not a common-place man, nor is his hotel an ordinary one. You enter by a small door in a gateway, and find yourself in a large marble-paved court, surrounded with galleries, open or latticed ; in the middle of the court is a large tank or fountain, and you feel cool and comfortable as soon as ever you hear its plashing water, supplied by one or two pipes always running. Around, are citron, lemon, and orange trees in fruit,

and flower sending forth a delicious perfume. In a large recess, looking on to the fountain, is an open divan, covered with rich Persian carpets, and furnished with luxurious couches and easy chairs.

The staircases from the court lead to the galleries, and here are the apartments of the hotel. Whether you look around through the haze of the cigarettes from the divan, or from the galleries when the moonlight is streaming into the court and illuminating the restless water in the fountain; or in the evening when the court is filled with after-dinner visitors looking over the curiosities in embroidery and silks, or steel and silver work, which adventurous merchants have brought here for sale; or even if you see it across the "groaning board" of the evening table-d'hôte, where waiters in loose trousers and scarlet fez's, or waiting maids, with light fitting embroidered jackets, are flitting about—at any time Demetri's hotel is worth seeing. Every traveller talks about "The Arabian Nights" as soon as ever he settles down there, and is perfectly justified in doing so.

Come now into the streets; but you will not care to walk through them for any length of time. They are narrow, dirty, and ill-paved, a large majority of the houses are built of mud, many of them of a most objectionable cream colour. Some of the streets are mere alleys, and the upper apartments project so much, that neighbours might sit at their windows and whisper confidentially across the road. The "street called Straight" is, as an American writer says, only

called Straight, it is not really so. In fact, we had no small difficulty in finding it, and when found, greater difficulty in keeping in it.

But here are the bazaars—long avenues of shops, in streets roofed over. They are not like other bazaars we have seen, a mere jumble of miscellaneous shops. But this roofed lane or bazaar belongs to the saddlers, this to tobacconists, that to seedsmen, others to silversmiths, mercers, shoemakers, and so on. The eye is fascinated with the wonderful blaze of colours exhibited in these bazaars, and with the extraordinary throng of people. There were thousands upon thousands apparently in and about the bazaars when I first made my way through them. Persians in gorgeous silks, Nubians in black, with very white teeth as a set off. Greeks, Turks, Jews, Bedouin of the desert; pilgrims *en route* to Mecca. Such a numerous medley never was seen. The hubbub was terrific. Now, way must be made for some grandee—now a string of camels drives the crowd into a mass—or a party of midshipmen just arrived from Beyrout rush through the bazaars on fleet donkeys, scattering sherbet stalls as they pass. And in the midst of it all, the richly-robed merchants sit on the sills of their shops smoking their tchibouks and sipping coffee with the most consummate indifference. But that business is transacted in Damascus, and to a considerable extent, is certain from the fact that all Syria is supplied from its markets, and the Bedouin of the far East come here for merchandise. Its manufactures

consist principally in the coarse cloth which makes the loose outer garment (*abbas*) of all the Syrians and Bedouin—the *abbas* in Syria is much more universal than the blue blouse of the French peasant. Besides this, they manufacture silks of all kinds; gold and silver ornaments, weapons of war, and everything necessary for a caravan.

It is imperative that we should visit some of the mosques—there are about a couple of hundred altogether, so let us go at once to the Great Mosque. That is it with the three graceful minarets. One approach is through a bazaar, and one of our party strolling about in search of recreation, accidentally walked into the court of the mosque, and trod in holy places with his hob-nailed boots. This roused the indignation of the Moslems, who warned him in Arabic to be off, but, not understanding Arabic, he did not take the hint, and was surprised to find himself surrounded and cast out bodily, while some of the more pious threw stones at him. The mosque is an enormous place occupying nearly as much ground as the temple at Jerusalem; the interior has a cold and melancholy grandeur, and is like all other mosques in this respect. The absence of anything like a pew or chair, or even a hassock, gives an unfinished look to it. Of course, there were the usual number of Persian and Turkey carpets covering all the floor, and a great display of glass globes for illumination. But the interest in this place is in what it was. It was here that Naaman came and bowed down to Rimmon

the Syrian god, while conscience worked within him. A curiously honest confession of being all things to all men is conveyed in his prayer. "In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." (2 Kings v. 18). After this it was a heathen temple to unknown gods; later on it became a Christian Church, and tradition says, that the head of John the Baptist is kept in a golden casket in a cave to this very day. Finally it became a mosque.

On the southern side of this mosque, inaccessible from within, there is a curious inscription which every traveller should see, but in order to do so, a little scrambling over the roof of the silversmith's bazaar is necessary. It is in Greek, and proclaims, despite the fanaticism of the Moslems which sought to erase from the city every vestige of Christianity:—"Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages." Thank God for the prophecy, and for the promised day when over every heathen temple the name which is above every name shall be inscribed.

We ascend one of the minarets, and the view from here is magnificent. We look down upon the wonderful gardens—a perfect fairy-land—see the silver threads of Barada running like a net-work through city and plain—gaze upon the wonderful city, crowded

with a dense population, with here a cluster of mud houses, which the lowest strata of the Whitechapel class would reject, side by side with gaily painted dwellings with marble courts and sparkling fountains and every appliance of oriental magnificence. We look away towards the desert, which is only six hours' journey off, and feel almost tantalised to know that ten days of camel-back would bring us to Bagdad.

Who can look from this height, and take in its thousand wonders without a feeling of sadness. Minarets are bristling up in every direction, proclaiming that the thousands who dwell in this "Pearl of the East," as it has been called, are the victims of the degrading imposition of Mahommedanism. Who can see this glorious sunshine flooding the plain and transfiguring even the common things around, without praying, "Send forth Thy light and Thy truth."

One of the days we spent in Damascus, was Sunday, and in the morning we went in a body to the protestant mission, where one of our "clericals" preached from the words, "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." There was a melancholy interest in walking through the Christian quarter of the town, still bearing traces of the havoc of 1860, when the most horrible massacre on record occurred. The story is too well known to need repetition, but a note as to the extent of the massacre made by the Rev. S. Robson, one of the Presbyterian Mission, and quoted in Murray's "Handbook," will be read with interest.

"After the massacre in Damascus, the clergy and chief people of each sect made out a list of the persons belonging to their community who were killed, as far as it was possible to ascertain their names. These lists contained the names of about 1200 *known inhabitants of the city*. It is certain, therefore, that that number at least of persons permanently resident in Damascus perished during the three days of the massacre. But, besides these, there was in the city at the time of the massacre, a considerable number of strangers who were brought by some business, and were in lodgings in various parts of the city, in the Mahomedan as well as in the Christian quarter. Of these, some were from the towns and villages of Syria, some from Mesopotamia, some from Egypt, and many were Armenians. *It is impossible to tell how many of this class were killed.*

"Another class of strangers in Damascus at the time consisted of the Christian inhabitants of the surrounding villages, who had taken refuge in the city. These refugees amounted to several thousands. They were lodged in churches, schools, and convents. Being crowded together, and mostly in public places, a very large number of them were killed. The best estimates of the number vary from 1300 to 1500.

"I am sure, therefore, that I am rather below than above the truth in saying that on the 9th, 10th, and 11th of July 1860, *there were murdered in Damascus at least 2500 adult male Christians.*"

It is distressing to walk through this devastated

part of Damascus, and to think of the fearful sufferings which were undergone, of the violent deaths of the 2500, or, as some would tell us, nearly double that number, and of the subsequent miseries of thousands more who lingered on, oppressed and despairing, till starvation or disease closed their career. And one cannot help feeling alarmed for the safety of those who have again peopled the Christian quarter of Damascus, for there still exists among the Mahomedans the same fanatical hatred and intolerance, and on the part of many of the Christians an earnest longing for the vengeance that has tarried long. It was but a spark that kindled the former mighty flame; and a spark at any moment may originate an even greater calamity.

It seemed to us appropriate to the day to pay a visit to the few places in Damascus associated with Scripture story. They lie in various parts of the city, and necessitate a great deal of painful walking, but there is so much to interest in a stroll through any of the streets that it is only when one cannot go any further that the amount of fatigue is realised.

There is shown to the credulous enquirer in a dingy lane leading from the street called Straight, the house of Judas, where Paul resided during the three days in which he sat in darkness. It is strange that Ananias should have been buried here, and stranger still that the Mahomedans should venerate the spot so much as to decorate it with coloured rags. But perhaps it

pays. We saw the old wall where St Paul escaped. He refers to the event thus: "In Damascus, the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me; and through a window, in a basket, was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." (2 Cor. xi. 32, 33).

Near the Christian cemetery a place is shown, said to be the scene of St Paul's conversion, but it has not a tithe of the same claims for belief as the spot already referred to on the road from Tiberias to Damascus. Near the eastern gate of the city is an interesting spot. It is the Lepers' Hospital—said to be upon the very spot where Naaman's house stood. It was pleasant to sit down under the shadow of a spreading tree and read the fifth chapter of the 2nd Kings.

As at Bethlehem and Nazareth there is one idea that outweighs all else, so in Damascus. It was here that St Paul was turned to the faith of Christ, and from this city went forth to preach, and teach, and labour, and die, "knowing nothing among men, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." And it made a pleasant close to a pleasant day to hear in a Christian church in that city some of the doctrines which he hazarded his life to declare.

Thus hastily have I given you a glimpse at Damascus, hastily, because it hardly belongs to the sphere of this book, being beyond the limits of the

Holy Land, properly so called. And as hastily, for the same reason, shall I take you through the remainder of the tour.

When we left Damascus we took the upper road, which is steep and difficult, but well repays any amount of labour. It commands the same view that Mahommed had when he said, "There must be but one Paradise," and therefore declined to enter Damascus. It was a cloudy morning, and when we looked down upon the great green sea of vegetation, it was comparatively dull and uninteresting. Presently the sunshine burst out in rolling waves of light, now glistening upon the many streams of Barada, now illuminating the white minarets of the mosques, now throwing its rich glow over the beautiful gardens, until in a few minutes all the city and plain were flooded with light. Mahommed certainly had an eye for the beautiful when he made his observations from this hill. Nowhere else can such a view be had, and those who do not see Damascus from this spot do not know what Damascus is, though they may have lived in it for months. It was a great shame of our dragomans to have persuaded some of the party to take the lower road, and so miss this magnificent view, but dragomans are not Mahomeds, and care little for the beautiful. No sooner had we turned our backs on the grand view of Damascus than we had before us one of the most curiously wild and desolate scenes imaginable—as complete a contrast as could possibly be conceived. Ridges of white hills—pain-

fully white in the strong glare of the sun, all the stronger from having before been obscured—surrounded with barren rocky heights and undulating waves of many coloured hills. In an hour or two we enter "The Gorge." Murray says: "No description could convey a full impression of the grandeur of this pass," and Murray is quite right. So I will not attempt it, but will merely say that there are jagged cliffs and rocks to a height of 2000 feet on your right, and a mighty wall of rock on the left, looking as if it had been sliced down by a lightning stroke. In some places the rock formations are so eccentric that it is hard to think they are not mammoth architectural ruins. It would be easy to lay the plot of a fairy tale in the midst of these weird rocks and ravines. The elves and gnomes and genii of Scandinavia all came from places such as these, though not half so fine. A river—the Barada—runs through the gorge, it is literally the river of the Water of Life; amid the death and desolation all around, life and beauty are brought into existence all along its course, and groves and orchards, among which the walnut is conspicuous, are spread in a bountiful profusion even up the steep hill sides.

We lunched at the fountain of Fijeh—'Ain Fijj—one of the sources of the Abana, the river of Damascus.

There is an old temple in ruins; when or why it was built nobody knows; and at its base there is a cave. From this, with a dash and a roar, there rushes

up, not a mere bubbling spring, but a full-grown river. It laughs, and chuckles, and splashes its foam over rocks and stones for a short distance—seventy or eighty yards—and then joins another and much smaller branch of Barada; and the two thus joined together make one river, which the Arabs of to-day call Barada, and the ancients called Abana.

All the inhabitants of an adjacent village turned out to see us, perching themselves upon crags and rocks, making a very pretty effect, while our table in this wilderness of beauty was spread upon the stone ledges just over the seething waters.

Then along ledges of rock, and steep embankments, first this side of the river, and then that, sometimes through fields, and sometimes in white chalky passes, until we reached Abila, where we camped for the night. It will be remembered that in Luke's Gospel (iii. 1), Lysanias is mentioned as being "Tetrarch of Abilene," the province of which Abila was once the capital. The mountain sides are full of holes, which have been used as tombs; and on some of the cliffs are inscriptions. Perched on the top of a very high hill, not far from our camping-place, is a *wely*, marking the burial-place of Abel. His tomb is thirty feet long!

Next day we continued our course through wild and beautiful glens, past the town of Zebdâny, and over its flowery plain; then up, and up, by a series of zig-zags, till we came to Surghâya, a little village nestling under the highest peak of Anti-Leba-

non. The villagers were very kind and attentive, inviting us into their houses, and showing us what few things were to be seen. In one house, scrupulously clean, there were two squared mounds in the centre of the chief room. It was a tomb, and the father and mother of that family rested there, still under the old roof-tree, their memories fresh and fragrant, and the love of their children unabated.

Next day we were still ascending through rugged country, until we attained an altitude of 4500 feet, and then suddenly there burst upon us the whole range of Lebanon, a mighty wall of dazzling snow, thirty to forty miles long, bounding a richly cultivated plain as it appeared. The hill sides were curious for the varied colours they exhibited, ranging from slate to red. When we had been in the saddle for five hours we drew up at Baalbec!

Never was there such a mighty mass of ruins in such picturesque surroundings, and in such perfect preservation. There are the remains of two magnificent temples, and one smaller edifice. The first is the Temple of the Sun, the other the Temple of Jupiter, and the third is merely called the Circular Temple.

In the Great Temple, dedicated to "The Great Gods of Heliopolis," (Baalbec was originally called Heliopolis), the Phœnicians once worshipped Baal, and the Romans did honour to Jupiter. The temple was a vast *peristyle*, that is, a temple with columns round it. These stood on walls fifty feet high. Only six



Mount Lebanon.—*On Holy Ground*, p. 316.



columns remain, "their height, including base and capital, is seventy-five feet; over this rises the entablature, fourteen feet more." The effect must have been marvellously imposing when fifty-four of these columns stood around the sacred enclosure. We walked amongst the fallen masses where once the columns stood, and found that the huge blocks corresponded with what appeared almost minute parts of the mighty works yet standing. The ruins of this temple are about 300 feet long and 160 wide.

The Temple of Jupiter is smaller than the Great Temple, but larger than the Parthenon at Athens, and is in good preservation. Although many of the columns of the peristyle lie in masses around the temple, some are standing; and on the north side nine of them in a row are almost uninjured. One has fallen against the wall on the south side, and looks as if it must inevitably slide and fall, but it has remained where it now is for more than a century. The interior of this building is very striking, and one wonders at the mighty works of them of old time, as we gaze on masses of stone so delicately sculptured that the fruit and flowers upon them seem to be real.

But it is not the delicate work, nor the variety of compartments, nor the extent of ground covered by the ruins, that excites the deepest wonder. It is the enormous size of the stones employed in the foundations and buildings that arrests attention. In the western wall are three stones—"of these one is 64 feet long, another 63 feet 8 inches, and the third 63

feet ; in all 190 feet 8 inches. Their height is 13 feet, and their thickness about the same. They are 20 feet above the ground." These stones point back to a remote antiquity—long before the peristyle ; and they point back to a secret long since lost, of raising mammoth structures which this enquiring age has not been able to unravel.

There are many things to wonder at and admire in Baalbec. One never wearies of gazing upon those graceful ruins, beautiful from every aspect and in every light ; but they suggest trains of thought and association foreign to the purpose of this book. It is not "on holy ground" that we are standing ; and with the influences upon us which the ruins of Palestine have created, we forget the might of Phœnician strength, the poetry of Grecian architecture, the pomp of Roman power, and sigh to think that all this magnificence was pride, this worship Pagan, and all this skill, and grace, and beauty defiled by voluptuous and soul-destroying sin.

I climbed a wall and sat upon a richly-sculptured parapet watching the sun set. To the left was Hermon, to the right Lebanon, and at my feet the whole vast area of ruins.

It was an hour full of suggestion, and one could not fail to trace how the word of the Lord was receiving its fulfilment ; how the false systems were lying in the dust and darkness ; while His own prophetic proclamation was gaining daily new force and power—"I am the Light of the world !"

The valley of Lebanon, which from the ridges of Anti-Lebanon looked so smooth, and level, and well cultivated, we found to be a snare and a delusion, as it was full of pitfalls and innumerable swampy places, where our horses occasionally stuck. Twenty-two miles of this was very severe, but we were rewarded by a good halt at Kerak Núh, famous as the burial-place of Noah. His tomb is seventy feet long! How long those patriarchs lived I had never before realised!

We passed through the Christian village of Zahleh, the largest in the Lebanon, in single file along the steep streets, sometimes in the water-course, which runs through the midst of the town, and sometimes up stone steps for a couple of hundred yards or so; our horses making a deafening clatter as they struck, slipped, and scrambled on the slippery stones. All the 10,000 inhabitants of the place seemed to have turned out to greet us, windows, doors, and house-tops being filled with smiling faces, and all giving us a word of salutation or blessing.

Zahleh suffered terribly in the massacres of 1860, when the town was captured by the Druzes, and burnt to the ground.

There was an air of comfort and cleanliness about the place, and an intelligence among the people to which we had long been strangers. It was an entirely *Christian* village.

An hour after this we were upon the diligence road, running from Damascus to Beyrout. Oh, the luxury

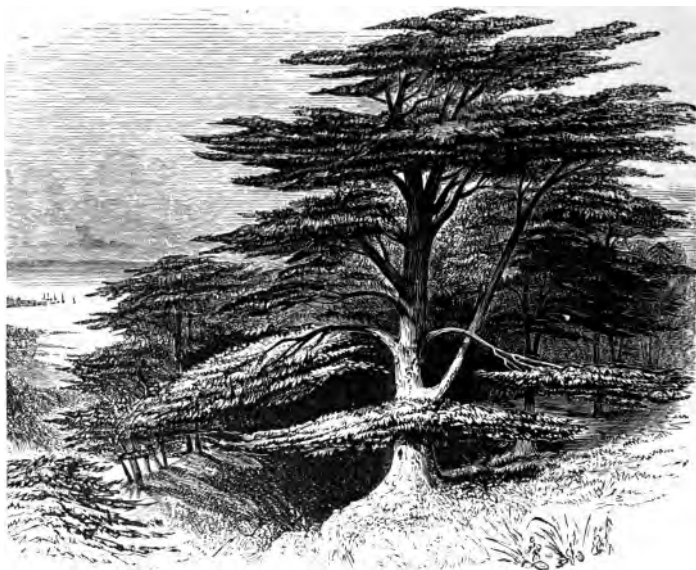
of a good, hard, level road, after the rocks and crags and swamps of Palestine! We could not resist the temptation; a smack of the whip, and away went the horses, tearing at a mad gallop up the gently winding road. Judas Maccabeus distinguished himself, and came up to the old khan by the road side, where our tents were pitched for the night, in really fine form.

A diligence runs upon this road—a ramshackle old concern it is, of lumbering proportions—and does the journey from Damascus to Beyrout in about fourteen hours.

The road, made by a French company, is a very good one, ascending by a series of zig-zags to the summit of Lebanon, and then again, by more zig-zags, down to Beyrout.

It was a tremendous journey the next day to cross Lebanon. The sun was scorching, the glare of light on the road was trying, and the horses seemed to know that they were coming to the end of the journey, and played pranks. We had more accidents on this last day of travel than in any preceding, some of our best horsemen getting an occasional spill. When we gained the summit of Lebanon, the view was magnificent. Around, the thick snows of the mountain, away in the distance, the Mediterranean, mingling with the sky, and below, a lovely glen, about nine or ten miles across. As we descended the scene changed at almost every bend of the road, until we got glimpses of Beyrout. Then through a civilised region, with orchards hedged in, and houses in the form of the Swiss, until





Cedars of Lebanon. — *On Holy Ground*, p. 321.

at last we found ourselves among the shops and the paved streets of Beyrout.

(I may mention that the only cedars of Lebanon I saw were a few of stunted growth in the neighbourhood of Baalbec. The far-famed cedars necessitate a couple of days' journey to reach them, and this could not be done at the time we were in Syria, had we wished to do so, the snows not having melted rendering the journey impossible.)

The Hotel Bellevue is on the edge of the sea, and is kept by the father of Timoleon, our dragoman. A capital hotel it is, "replete with every comfort," as advertisements say; and who shall describe the comfort of real comfort after long journeyings and "tent and saddle life?" But one becomes conscious that the wild, delightful rural life is over, and though longing for rest, it forces a sigh to know that it is at the sacrifice of most delicious fatigue. We are giving up our tent for a room that is just like any you may find in France or Switzerland. We are leaving the halting-places, under trees and beside springs of water, for a modern town; we are soon to part with our dragomans and our merry muleteers; and soon—and this is the gloomiest thought of all—to leave the shores of Syria, never again to gaze upon its hills and plains, never to read again amid its ruins the story of its glorious past.

But while we are in Beyrout let us see all that we

can, and enjoy as much as possible. This is rather hard work, however, for the very next day after our arrival (Sunday) the hot wind began to blow, and its influence was so depressing and distressing to mind and body that it greatly marred enjoyment.


Memorials of the long past are few in Beyrout, and the present aspect of the city, the most flourishing in Syria, gives you no idea of its history. But it has a history, and a singular one. Founded by the Phœnicians, captured by the Romans, destroyed by earthquakes, ransacked by crusaders, possessed by Turks, bombarded by the English—such is an outline. A few scenes stand out in relief. "It was here that Herod the Great procured the flatigious mock trial to be held over his two sons. The elder Agrippa greatly favoured the city, and adorned it with a splendid theatre and amphitheatre, besides baths and porticos, inaugurating them with games and spectacles of every kind, including shows of gladiators. Here, too, after the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus celebrated the birthday of his father, Vespasian, by the exhibition of similar spectacles, in which many of the captive Jews perished."

And now it is a flourishing city!—that is to say, it has bankers, and merchants, and consulates. The French mail steamers call here, and the streets are constructed for vehicles to pass through, which is more than can be said for Jerusalem and Damascus. The houses are of semi-European build, and the costumes of semi-European cut.

Beyrout has always been celebrated for its learning (Gregory Thematurgus finished his education here, and Appion studied in this city), and to-day Beyrout is the fountain of knowledge for Syria. The American Mission is known wherever anything of Syria is known, and the headquarters are in this city. I had the pleasure of hearing Dr Bliss, the president of the college, preach, and this was no mean privilege ; but I saw Dr Bliss surrounded with a group of some thirty or forty Syrian youths, and with many of these I conversed in English, and saw their works in calligraphy, in composition, in chemistry, and I know not what else, and in seeing these things, I saw the great power which is spreading, and ere long will revolutionise Syria. God grant that it may speedily.

In the evening, sitting on the balcony of the hotel, I was much interested in watching the fishermen. They do not cast lines or nets, but they have flaming fires hanging from the prow of their boats in open cages or stoves. The fishermen stand in the bow of the boat, looking very picturesque in their white robes and red fezz, with spears poised ready for the throw. Quick as thought they see the fish, and the fish feels the dart, and his carcase is floundering in the bottom of the boat.

And the next night ? Well, it must be told. The *Hungaria* lay out at sea, a fleet of little boats was by the shore, a crowd of people stood on the parapet facing Andrea's Hotel. There was a great waving of hands, and many adieux in many tongues,



as the boats took us off to the Austrian Lloyd steamer.

Soon there was a shrill whistle, the small boats moved aside, and as I sat leaning over the bulwarks, looking for the last time on the familiar faces of some of the muleteers and attendants through our long journeyings, as the steamer moved slowly away, there came from one of the boats a cry, and the last word I heard was "Backsheesh!"

Soon fading shores receded from my sight, night threw her mantle round the head of Lebanon, and I bade that goodly land of promise, that sacred land of



CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE CAPABILITIES OF THE LAND.



WHAT are the capabilities of Palestine? Can it ever be made available for a large population? Is it possible for it ever to become again a land flowing with milk and honey?

These are questions which have been put to me over and over again since my return, and I have no hesitation in answering them in the affirmative. There is, however, no country in the world that has suffered more from neglect, from constant warfare, from misrule, and generally desolating causes. Moreover, it is a country which differs from all others, from this fact, that it was, so to speak, the especial care of the Almighty, and subsequently became the object of His displeasure. In old time it was said: It is "a land which the Lord thy God careth for; the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Deut. xi. 12). The land was always identified, cared for, and blessed with the people; but when the people rebelled, and the Lord of the land was rejected, bless-

ings were turned into curses, and as history has shown the *people* to be witnesses everywhere of the just anger of the Lord, so the *land* remains a witness to the same fact.

I am aware that this notion is unpopular with many; they object to regard the land as under any greater curse than Greece, or any other country that is left to itself. But I find in the same book in which are given prophecies about the people, distinct predictions as to the land, and as I cannot, in the face of history, disregard the one, neither can I the other. "Upon the land of my people, there shall come up thorns and briars." "The land shall be utterly emptied and utterly spoiled." The same prophecy which tells that the people shall be scattered among all nations—most literally fulfilled—says also of the land, "The heavens over thee shall be as brass, and the earth under thee as iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land dust and powder." (Deut. xxviii. 23).

Pages of Scripture could be produced to prove that the land once was extraordinarily fertile, that it became, as a punishment to the people and a witness to the truth of revelation, extraordinarily barren, and that it shall again become prosperous. "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, *until* the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke xxi. 24).

In reply to the question, "Is Palestine capable of again becoming a fruitful land?" I have already stated my conviction in the affirmative, and would support it by one or two observations.

1. There can be no doubt that the principal cause of its present sterility is *lack of rain*. It will be remembered that the promise of rain to make the land fruitful above all lands, was given provisionally.

"It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day . . . that I will give you the rain of the land in his due season—the first rain and the latter rain—that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil . . . but take heed, for if ye turn aside and serve other gods, . . . then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you, and he shut up the heaven that there be not rain, and that the land yield not her fruit. . ." (Deut. xi. 13-16).

In the times of Jeremiah, the desolation of the land is not only attributed to the lack of this conditional rain, but it is shown that its withdrawal was regarded as the fulfilment of a prediction. Speaking of the wickedness of the people, the prophet says, "*Therefore* the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain." (Jer. iii. 3); see also Jer. v. 24-25.

Now it is a curious and interesting fact that the latter rains which for so long a period have been withholden, have for a considerable time regularly fallen. During this period the land has undergone great improvement, and a traveller who has visited it several times writes thus :—


"Two years ago I saw this land as a land of drought and vegetative desolation now all is fresh and verdant, the hills are covered with beautiful

and fragrant herbs and flowers, the valleys and the plains are carpeted with fine crops of wheat and barley, fringed with flowers of the most beautiful hues and varieties. . . . The rains this year (1872), both the 'early' and the 'latter,' the first due in November and the latter in February, have been diffused over the whole season from October to the end of February; and although the rainfall at Jerusalem has been only about 17 inches, the effect has been equal to 24 or 25 inches in more stormy seasons, and to that the country owes its beauty and promise."

2. Without resorting to divine interposition for withholding the rains, its absence may be accounted for to a great extent from the fact that the trees which once crowned the hills, attracting the rain, have long since ceased to exist, and where once were forests, now are naked and barren ridges. Special providences are worked by special human agencies, and it may be that the sword of the destroyer, and the havoc of war were intended to be instruments, by means of the desolations they wrought, for withholding the rain; in the same manner industry and skill may be the instruments for bringing it back again. What Palestine wants to ensure its prosperity is population and peace. While the scanty crops have to be gathered in under an armed body guard, it is impossible that agriculture can make progress, but when the Turk, the enemy of progress, is driven from the land, and surely the time is ripening for such a crusade; when force of numbers drives the

Bedouin into further regions ; when the dwellers in the land can sit under their own vines and fig-trees, none daring to make them afraid ; when those old terraces, which are still to be seen on hundreds of hills rising tier upon tier to the very top, as they do in the Rhine and champagne countries, are again tended by diligent hands ; when the mould which has been washed off from the limestone foundations by centuries of rain is again placed there ; when the land is drained and the water supply carefully husbanded (fountains had to be "sealed" even in Solomon's day) ; when the appliances of modern science are brought to bear upon the land, *then* shall the desert blossom as the rose, and the earth shall yield her increase, then shall a handful of corn on the top of the mountains produce fruit that shall shake like Lebanon.

3. Specimens are given in all directions in Palestine of what the whole land might become. *Jaffa* is a Paradise as regards vegetation. Its orange groves are marvels of beauty. Who has not tasted an orange from Jaffa knows not what an orange is. I have plucked oranges from the tree in many places in both hemispheres, but never knew any to compare with these. The *Plain of Sharon* in its present state of cultivation yields crops of marvellous richness under the care of a little band of German colonists, notwithstanding the fact that it has lain waste for centuries. This shows what may be done, and it is high time that the Christian world took the hint.



The *road sides* all through the land speak of wonderful capability, for I know of no other country where the cyclymen, the lily, the narcissus, and the anemone will grow in such glorious profusion upon mere heaps of stone. The *Vale of Urtas*, near Solomon's Pools, has been worked by an Englishman and some converted Jews. It is as the garden of the Lord for beauty, and it is a successful proof of the capability of the land. The Englishman, it is stated on good authority, was able to get out of the ground no fewer than seven successive crops of potatoes. The *Valley of Shechem* is what nearly all the land might become—it is reclaimed and redeemed from desolation, and here may be seen many of the old terraces utilised and placed under careful cultivation. *Bethlehem, Hebron, Esdraelon, Nazareth, Hooleh, Dan*,—in all these places and many more, it may be seen by the most casual observer that all that is required to make Palestine capable of sustaining the myriads who, according to the prophecies of Scripture are yet to re-people it, is population and peace.

CHRISTIAN WORK IN PALESTINE.

Miss Arnott's School, Jaffa,

Is established under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Female Education in the East. An extract from a letter of Miss Arnott's, published in the society's last report, will be read with interest :—

"There is an average of sixty girls, consisting of Greek Christians, Jewesses, and Moslems. We have them as young as three years of age, but owing to the early marriages, we are seldom able to keep them after thirteen, though in a few instances they remain till fifteen. A very nice Jewish girl left at that age to be married last spring, after having been in the school for nine years. Another, married shortly before her, had continued for five years. The Jewesses are, on the whole, the most steady in their attendance—the Mahommedans least so. Last year we lost a nice intelligent Mahommedan girl by death, but we had reason to hope that the Christian teaching which she had received had been blessed to her, and that she died believing in Christ Jesus as her Saviour.

"The school is conducted entirely on *Christian* principles. The Bible is freely taught to all, and the Old and New Testaments are read alternately. The only books used in the school are the Bible "Line upon Line" in Arabic, and the primer. Arabic is the common language, being understood by all, but a few of the elder girls have also learned English. The children are taught reading, writing, arithmetic, and needlework.

"Two years ago I began to receive a few girls into the house with a view to training them for future usefulness as teachers. Of these there are now eight, varying in age from eight to fourteen.

"The cost of maintaining one child is £10 a year.

The education of these orphan girls does not consist in mere head-knowledge. They are also trained to habits of industry. All the domestic work is performed by them, and even the youngest child does her part ; but this arrangement does not interfere in the least with their school duties."

The Nazareth Orphanage.

The Church Missionary Society have a flourishing mission in this town, and the last report shows that, including out-stations, there are now 450 native Christians, 66 communicants, and 260 school children associated with them. The girls' school is superintended by Miss Julie Rose, who was sent out by the Society for Promoting Female Education in the East. She has brought to her work zeal, energy, courage, and faith, and her work is prospering, as the following incident will show :—

When she arrived at Nazareth she found fifty day scholars, and twenty-two children in the orphanage established by her predecessors ; within a few days she had applications from six others.

She was obliged to refuse all but one—a little starving child of three, and she took her in faith that means would come for its support. Nay, more, she conceived the idea of buying a plot of land and building a fine schoolhouse. Imagine her joy when she received £50 from a friend towards the purchase of the ground.

"I am sure," she writes, "the Lord will raise up more friends for the building, for *He knows our need*. I shall try and get as much *in readiness* as I can, and then wait for the pleasure of our dear Master, as He can very suddenly give us the means out of His rich treasury. It is but a small matter with Him, and with £1000 we could well begin. The house will be plain and substantial, but the wood must be brought from Cyprus or Beyrout."

It is with no small interest one turns to the last report of the society to see what comes of such bold faith as this. Here is the sequel:—

"With deep gratitude to the Lord, whose is the earth and the fulness thereof, the Committee have to announce the munificent anonymous gift of £1000 towards the Nazareth Orphanage Building Fund. The building has already been begun, and the remaining funds required will, doubtless, be provided in His own time and way."

There is not room here to give details of the missions at Shemlan, Mount Lebanon, Sidon, Damascus, Bethlehem, &c. ; but those who are interested in the matter can obtain full information from the Society's report, or "The Female Missionary Intelligence," (Suter & Co., 32 Cheapside), or of Miss Webb, 267 Vauxhall Bridge Road, S.W.

SCRIPTURES REFERRED TO AND ILLUSTRATED.

GENESIS.		JOSHUA—continued.	
	PAGE		PAGE
xii. 6, . . .	234	viii. 30, 35, . . .	235
xiii. 3, 4, . . .	223	ix.	41
xiv. 14, . . .	291	x. 12,	36
xv. 2,	66	x. 37,	67
xix. 28,	107	xi. 1-15,	289
xxiii. 10, . . .	66	xi. 17,	294
xxiii. 19, . . .	71	xiv. 13,	67
xxv. 8,	72	xviii. 10,	230
xxviii. 11, . . .	224	xix. 21,	243
xxxiii. 19, . . .	66	xx.	67
xxvii. 15, . . .	235	xxiv. 32,	234
xxvii. 34, . . .	67		
xxxv. 16, 20, . . .	52	JUDGES.	
xlvi. 7,	52	iii. 31,	32
xlvi. 22,	235	vii. 6, 7,	249
xlix. 50,	72	xviii. 9,	292
LEVITICUS.		RUTH.	
xiii. 46,	191	ii. 3,	32
NUMBERS.		I. SAMUEL.	
xiii. 22, 23, 33, . . .	66	i.	231
DEUTERONOMY.		vii. 2,	41
ix. 29, 30,	235	x. 2,	53
x. 13, 16,	327	x. 26,	221
xi. 12,	325	xvii. 7,	45
xxii. 8,	13	xvii. 40,	45
xxvii. 17,	32	xxii. 2,	80
xxviii. 23,	326	xxii. 3, 4,	80
xxxiv. 6,	105	xxviii-xxx.,	251
JOSHUA.		xxix. 2,	253
...		II. SAMUEL.	
		...	

II. SAMUEL—*continued.*

	PAGE
iii. 17-39, . . .	68
iv. 12, . . .	68
v. 7, . . .	163
xiv. 2, . . .	79
xv. 10, . . .	63
xv. 23-30, . . .	159
xxiv. 12, . . .	163

I. KINGS.

v. 9, . . .	15
vi. 7, . . .	201
xii. 28, . . .	292
xii., xiii., . . .	227
xiv. 1, 17, . . .	232
xvi. 34, . . .	126
xx. 29, . . .	280

II. KINGS.

ii. 8, . . .	117
ii. 19-22, . . .	124
iv. 18-21, . . .	251
v.	312
v. 18, . . .	308
vi., vii., . . .	239-241
vi. 8, 23, . . .	242
xxiii. 10, . . .	215
xxiii. 15, 20, . . .	227

I. CHRONICLES.

xi. 15, 19, . . .	95
xiii. 5, 6, . . .	42
xxvii. 29, . . .	25

II. CHRONICLES.

ii. 11, 16, . . .	15
-------------------	----

EZRA.

iii. 7, . . .	15
---------------	----

PSALMS.

	PAGE
lxxxvii. 1, 2, . . .	142
cxxii.	142
cxxxii. 8, . . .	42

ECCLESIASTES.

ii. 4, 6, . . .	57
-----------------	----

SONG OF SOLOMON.

iv. 13, 15, . . .	57
-------------------	----

ISAIAH.

xxv. 7 . . .	170
xxxiii. 9, . . .	25
xxxv. 1, 2, . . .	25
lxiv. 10, 11, . . .	184

JEREMIAH.

iii. 3, . . .	327
v. 24, 25, . . .	327
vii. 12, 14, . . .	232
vii. 31, . . .	215
xix, . . .	215
xxvi. 6, . . .	232
xxvi. 18, . . .	190

HOSEA.

xiii. 16, . . .	240
-----------------	-----

JOEL.

iii. 2, 12, . . .	181
-------------------	-----

AMOS.

vii. 14, . . .	79
----------------	----

JONAH.

iv. 2, . . .	10
--------------	----

MICAH.

i. 6, . . .	241
v. 2, . . .	83

ZACHARIAH.			JOHN.		
		PAGE			PAGE
xiv. 4,	.	157	iv. .	.	234
MATTHEW.			iv. 35,	.	238
ii. 18,	.	52	vii. 53,	.	150
viii. 32,	.	281	xi. .	.	155
xiv. 34,	.	281	xviii. 1,	.	160
xvi. 16, 19,	.	295	ACTS.		
xxi. 8, 9,	.	153	i. 11,	.	157
xxiv. 3,	.	154	ii. 19,	.	194
xxvii. 5, 7,	.	216	vii. 5,	.	72
xxvii. 57,	.	27	ix. 5,	.	32
MARK.			ix. 32, 35,	.	26
ii. 40, 42,	.	191	ix. 34,	.	302
LUKE.			ix. 36-43,	.	14
ii. 4,	.	85	x. 6, 9,	.	12
ii. 8-14,	.	96	II. CORINTHIANS.		
iii. 1,	.	315	iii. 15,	.	170
iv. 29,	.	262	viii. 9,	.	145
vi. 17,	.	273	xi. 32, 33,	.	312
ix. 62,	.	31	HEBREWS.		
xii. 5,	.	284	xii. 22, 23,	.	143
xxi. 24,	.	326	II. PETER.		
xxiv. 13-31,	.	44	i. 17,	.	293
xxiv. 50,	.	157			

SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS ALLUDED TO.

Abel, 76, 315.	Eleazar, 66.
Abijah, 232.	Eli, 231.
Abinadab, 41.	Elijah, 49, 117, 266.
Abner, 68, 76.	Elisha, 117, 124, 242, 250.
Abraham, 63-77, 107, 161, 163, 223, 291.	Ephraim, 228.
Absolom, 68, 79, 148.	Eve, 76.
Adam, 76, 208.	Gideon, 45, 249.
Agrippa, 322.	Goliath, 245.
Ahab, 239, 247.	Good Samaritan, 128.
Ahaziah, 247.	Hannah, 230.
Amos, 79.	Herod, 81, 90, 164, 166.
Anak, 66.	Heth, Sons of, 71.
Ananias, 311.	Hiel, 126.
Arawnah, 163.	Hiram, King of Tyre, 15.
Aretas, 312.	Isaac, 64, 72, 169, 171.
Æneas, 26.	Isaiah, 216.
Baanah, 68.	Ishbosheth, 68, 76.
Barak, 245.	Ishmael, 72.
Benhadad, 280.	Jabin, 289.
Benjamin, 53.	Jacob, 64, 72, 73, 224, 234.
Boaz, 32, 84, 89.	Japhet, 7.
Caiaphas, 193.	Jehu, 247.
Cain, 76.	Jeroboam, 225, 292.
Caleb, 67.	Jesse, 76, 89.
Centurion, 209.	Jezebel, 247.
David, 39, 41, 45, 63, 64, 67-69, 84, 85, 95, 163, 194, 251.	John, 173, 255.
David's parents, 80.	John the Baptist, 117, 240, 303
Dives, 213.	Jonah, 10.
Dorcas, 14.	Jonathan, 253.
	Joram, 247.

- Joseph, 74, 234, 235, 242.
 Joseph, reputed Father of our Lord, 89, 90, 179, 262.
 Joseph of Arimathea, 27.
 Joshua, 35, 41, 67, 116, 125, 227, 230, 289, 294.
 Josiah, 245, 227.
 Judah, 146.
 Judah, Prophet of, 226.
 Judas of Damascus, 311.

 Lazarus, 127, 133, 155.
 Lazarus, The Beggar, 213.
 Leah, 72.
 Lot, 291.
 Lysanias, 315.

 Mamre, 66.
 Martha, 133, 155.
 Mary, The Virgin, 34, 64, 89, 169, 179, 205, 208, 260.
 Mary of Bethany, 133, 155.
 Mary Magdalene, 280.
 Melchizedek, 162.
 Micah, 83.
 Moses, 105.
 Moloch, 215.

 Naaman, 312.
 Naboth, 248.
 Naomi, 84.
 Nehemiah, 163.
 Nicodemus, 27.
 Noah, 319.

 Peter, 12, 26, 173, 193, 255, 295.
 Prophet of Judah, 226.
 Queen of Sheba, 182.

 Rachel, 51, 52.
 Rahab, 125.
 Rebekah, 72.
 Rechab, 68.
 Rehoboam, 226.
 Ruth, 32, 84, 89.

 Samson, 40, 46.
 Samuel, 47, 53, 231, 252.
 Sarah, 71.
 Saul, 53, 85, 251.
 Saul of Tarsus, 32.
 Shitrai, the Sharonite, 25.
 Shunamite Woman, 249.
 Simeon, 179.
 Simon the Cyrenian, 212.
 Simon the Tanner, 11.
 Sisera, 256.
 Solomon, 55, 57, 64, 78, 163, 194, 215.
 Sons of Aaron, 176.

 Tabitha, 14.

 Widow's Son, Nain, 257.
 Wise Men of the East, 50.
 Witch of Endor, 252, 257.
 Woman of Samaria, 230.

INDEX.

- Abana, 303.
 Abel, Tomb of, 315.
 Abilene, 315.
 Abou Gosch, 42.
 Abraham at Hebron, 64, 67.
 Abram's altar, 223.
 Abram's oak, 76.
 Ahab's palaces, 239, 247.
 Ai, site of, 227.
 'Ain el Tin, 282.
 'Ain es Sultan, 124.
 'Ain Fiji, 314.
 'Ain Mellahah, 289.
 'Ain Tabighah, 283.
 'Ain Yebuid, 228.
 Ajalon, 35.
 Amos at Tekoa, 79.
 Amorites, Joshua's victory over, 35.
 Andromeda and Perseus, 8.
 Anti-Lebanon, 302, 315.
 Aphek, 280.
 Arab amusements, 59, 131.
 Arab dancing, 59, 123.
 Arab prejudices, 30.
 Arab school, 69.
 Arab villany, 33.
 Araunah's threshing floor, 163, 169.
 Arimathea, 27.
 Baalbec, 316.
 Baal Gad, 294.
 Banias, 293.
 Barada, 314.
 Barka, 242.
 Bedouin, incursions of, 98.
 Bethany, 132.
 BETHEL, 222; Abram's altar, 223; Jacob's ladder, 224; Jeroboam's idolatry, 225.
 BETHLEHEM — First view of, 50; Well of the Wise Men of the East, 51; Rachel's Tomb, 51; Saul finds the asses, 53; Description, 82, 93; History of, 83; Ruth and Naomi, 84; David's exploits, 84; Birthplace of the psalms, 85; Church of the Nativity, 86; Legend of the inn, 89; Grotto of the manger, 88; Chapel of Joseph, 90; Altar of the innocents, 90; Cell of St Jerome, 91; Beauty of inhabitants, 94; Trade of, 94; The Shepherd's field, 97.
 Bethsaida, 283, 287.
 Bîreh, 221.
 Boats on Sea of Galilee, 279.
 Cæsarea Philippi, 293.
 Calvary, 210.
 Calves, worship of, 226.
 Camels, habits of, 61.
 Cana of Galilee, 271.
 Capernaum, 283.
 Castle of Subeibeh, 296.

- Cave of Adullam, 80.
 Cave of Machpelah, 70.
 Character of Palestine scenery,
 39, 99.
 Cherith, 126.
 Chorazin, 284.
 Coincidences, 107.
 Conscripts, 47.
 Convent of Elias, 50.
 Cook's tourists, 3.

 DAMASCUS—Saul's conversion,
 302; Demetri's hotel, 304;
 Streets of, 305; Bazaars, 306;
 Massacres, 310; House of
 Judas, 311; Old wall, 312;
 Great Mosque, 317; Curious
 inscription, 318.
 Dan, 291.
 DEAD SEA—First view of, 105;
 The Silent Shore, 109; Bath-
 ing, 109; Story of, 110.
 Departure from Jerusalem, 218.
 Distances in Palestine, 38.

 Ebal and Gerizim, 234.
 Elah, valley of, 45.
 El-Fûleh, 246.
 El-gannin, 243.
 Elisha's Fountain, 124.
 El Latroun, 34.
 Emmaus-Nicopolis, 34.
 Endor, 252, 256.
 Ephraim, land of, 228.
 Eshcol, 65.
 Esdraelon, 244.

 Fijeh, 314.
 Fountain of Elisha, 124.
 Fountain of Jezreel, 249.
 Frank Mountain, 81.

 Galilee, Sea of, 275.
 Gamala, 279.
 Gennesareth, 275.
 German settlement, 34.
 Gethsemane, 159.
 Gibeonites' League, The, 41.
 Gilboa, 244, 251-254.
 Good Samaritan parable, 128.
 Gorge of Abana, 314.
 Gospel for body and soul, 301.

 HEBRON—Old road to, 63;
 Prejudices of inhabitants, 64,
 70; Antiquity, 66; Abram's
 dwelling, 67; Joshua's victory,
 67; David reigning over, 67;
 Abner's burial, 68; Pool at,
 68; Cave of Machpelah, 70;
 Described by Stanley, 73;
 Curiosities, 76; Abram's oak,
 76.
 Hermon, 277.
 Herodium, 81.
 Hinnom, Valley of, 215.
 Holy Sepulchre, 205-210.
 Hooleh, Lake of, 288.
 Horns of Hattin, 272.
 House of Judas, 311.
 House of Rimmon, 307.
 House of Simon the tanner, 12.
 House tops, 12.

 Illustrations of Scripture, 31.
 Intercession of Saints, 75.

 Jackals, 37.
 Jacob's Well, 233.
 JAFFA—View from sea, 2; Land-
 ing at, 6, 15; Origin of name,
 8; Invested by French, 8;
 Jonah's visit, 18; House

- of Simon the tanner, 11 ;
House tops, 12 ; Peter's
vision, 13 ; Tabitha, 14 ;
Hiram's contract, 15.
Jehoshaphat, Valley of, 181.
Jenin, 243.
JERICHO, 123 ; Modern, 121 ;
Ancient, 124 ; Fountain of
Elisha, 124 ; Joshua's victory,
125 ; Quarantania, 126 ; Road
from, to Jerusalem, 127 ;
Views, 129 ; The Inn, 130.
Jews' wailing place, 184.
Jezreel, 247.
JORDAN—Exaggerated descrip-
tions, 112 ; Bathing, 113 ;
Memories of past history,
116 ; Meeting place of
sorrowful souls, 119 ; Types,
119 ; Jungle on banks, 120.
Joseph at Shechem, 235.
Joseph's Tomb, 235.
Joseph's Well, 288.
Joshua's victory over Amorites,
35.
JERUSALEM—From the Jaffa
Road, 48 ; New Russian Quar-
ter, 49, 198 ; from Mount of
Olives, 133, 153 ; First Stroll
in, 135 ; Church of Holy
Sepulchre, 137 ; A Sunday
in, 140 ; English Church on
Mount Zion, 141, 145 ;
Mount Zion, 146 ; Streets,
147 ; Population, 147 ; St
Stephen's Gate, 148 ; Scene
of Ascension, 156 ; Garden
of Gethsemane, 159 ; Tower
of Hippicus, 166 ; *The
Temple*, 166, 169 ; Castle of
Antonia, 167 ; Dome of the
Chain, 168 ; Mosque of Omar,
170 ; The Sacred Rock, 172 ;
The Cave, 173 ; Mahom-
medan Legends, 174, 178,
180 ; Mosque el Aksa, 175 ;
Excavations, 178, 187 ;
Cradle of Christ, 179 ; Solo-
mon's Stables, 179 ; Valley
of Jehoshaphat, 181 ; Golden
Gate, 182 ; Jews' Wailing
Place, 184 ; Leper Village,
190 ; Popish Fables, 193 ;
The Upper Chamber, 193,
196 ; Tomb of David, 194 ;
Underground Jerusalem, 200.
Church of the Holy Sepulchre
—Description of, 205 ; Stone
of Unction, 205 ; Sepulchre,
206 ; Centre of the Earth ;
Holy Fire, 206 ; Calvary-
Golgotha ; Rent Rocks, 207-
210 ; The Via Dolorosa, 213.
Judge's Mound, The, 291.
Kadesh, 290.
Kedron, 148, 159, 160, 171.
Kedron, Gorge of, 100.
Kefr Hauwar, 299.
Kefr Kenna, 270.
Kerak Nûh, 319.
Kirjath-Arba, 66.
Kolonieh, or Emmaus, 144.
KUJATH-JEARIM—The Ark at,
41 ; Removed to Jerusalem,
42 ; Birthplace of Jeremiah,
43.
Kuran Hattîn, 272.
Lake Hooleh, 288.

- Lake of Galilee, 276.
 Land of Gennesareth, 281.
 Lebanon, 316, 320.
 Legends of Mahommedans,
 174, 178, 180.
 Leper Village, A, 190.
 Ludd, 26, 30.
 Lydda, 26, 30.

 Machpelah, 70.
 Magdala, 280.
 Mahommedan Legends, 174,
 178, 180.
 Mahommedan Funeral, 183.
 MAR SABA, Convent of, 100 ;
 Legends of, 103 ; Monks,
 104.
 Massacres at Damascus, 310,
 319.
 Massacre of the Innocents, 52,
 90.
 Medical Missions, 301.
 Merom, Waters of, 289.
 Mosque of Omar, 166, 182.
 Mount of Beatitudes, 272.
 Mount of Blessing (Gerizim),
 235.
 Mountains of Moab, 106.
 Mountains of Quarantania, 126.
 Mount of Transfiguration, 255.

 Nablûs, 236.
 Naboth's Field, 248.
 Nain, 246.
 NAZARETH, 258 ; Fountain of
 Virgin, 260 ; Latin Convent,
 261 ; Mary's Kitchen, 261 ;
 Joseph's Workshop, 262 ;
 View from Wely, 266.
 Neby Mûsa, 105.

 Noah, Tomb of, 319.
 Nob, 221.
 Nubk, Hedges of, 121, 127.

 Orange Groves of Jaffa, 21.
 Our Camp, 17.

 Paneas, 294.
 Panium, 294.
 Paul at Damascus, 312.
 Pilgrims, Russian, 3.
 Perseus and Andromeda, 8.
 Peter's Confession, 295.
 Peter's Vision, 13.
 Pharpar, 298.
 Plain of Sharon, 25.
 Pools of Solomon, 56.
 Pool of Siloam, 216.

 Quarantania, Mountains of, 126.

 Rachel's Tomb, 51.
 Rama, 52.
 Ramleh, 27.
 Raynald of Châtillon, 273.
 Rîha—Modern Jericho, 121.
 Rimmon, House of, 307.
 Robber's Fountain, The, 228.
 Rose of Sharon, 25.
 Russian Pilgrims, 3.

 Samaritans, The, 237.
 Samson's Moods, 40.
 Samuel's Vision, 231.
 Scripture Illustrated, 31.
 Sealed Fountain, 57.
 Sebaste—Samaria, 240.
 Sharon, Plain of, 25.
 Shechem, 236.
 Shepherd's Field, The, 97
 Shiloh, 230.
 Shunem, 249.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Siloam, Pool of, 216.
 Singel, 228.
 Sky Scenery, 36.
 Solomon's Gardens, 57.
 Solomon's Pools, 56.
 Source of Jordan, 291.
 St Jerome, 91.
 Subeibeh, Castle of, 296.
 Surghâya, 315.

 Tabor, 244, 254.
 Tel el Kady, 291.
 Tel Hattin, 274.
 Tekoa, 79.
 Temple of Jupiter, Baalbec,
 316.
 Tiberias, 276.
 Tomb of David, 194.
 Transfiguration, Mount of, 255.</p> | <p>Underground Jerusalem, 200,
 Uninhabited Districts, 63.
 Urtas, 57.

 Valley of Elah, 45.

 Wady Yalo (Ajalon), 35.
 Wady-es-Sumt (Elah), 45.
 Wady Kelt (Brook Cherith), 126.
 Wady Fik, 280.
 Waters of Merom, 289.
 Widow's Son of Nain, 257.
 Wise Woman of Tekoa, 79.
 Woman of Samaria, 238.

 Zaccheus, House of, 122.
 Zahleh, 319.
 Zerin, 244.
 Zidonians, 291.</p> |
|---|---|





1

